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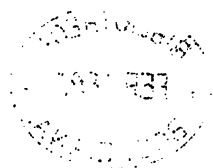
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CHRISTIANITY

CONFIRMED BY

Jewish and Heathen Testimony

AND THE

Deductions from Physical Science, etc.

BY

THOMAS STEVENSON, F.R.S.E., F.G.S.

MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS

SECOND EDITION



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CONTENTS.



	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I

CHAPTER I.

PROPHECY OF THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH .	
ADMITTED BY THE JEWS TO HAVE BEEN IN	
THE OLD TESTAMENT	17

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC PROPHECY	
WAS KNOWN TO THE HEATHEN WORLD .	31

CHAPTER III.

HEATHEN TESTIMONY AS TO THE FACT OF	
CHRIST'S EXISTENCE, AND THE MANNER,	
TIME, AND PLACE OF HIS DEATH; AND	
ALSO THAT HE CLAIMED TO BE THE	
MESSIAH	39

CHAPTER IV.

	PAGE
PROPHECIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ACCEPTED AS MESSIANIC IN THE JEWISH TARGUMS AND WRITINGS	46
1. A Messenger was to be sent to prepare the way for the Messiah	46
2. The Messiah was to appear in Judea	50
3. The Messiah was to die as a Malefactor	54
4. The Jews themselves were to reject the Messiah	58
5. The Jewish Kingdom was to come to an end	61
6. Jerusalem and its Temple to be destroyed	64
7. The Jewish Daily Sacrifice was to cease	71
8. The Jews to be Dispersed, yet Preserved	74
9. The Jews to be Persecuted as well as Dis- persed	76
10. Though the Jews themselves were to be Pre- served, the surrounding Nations were to be Destroyed	77
11. A New Covenant to be given	81
12. The Messiah was to Conquer and Regenerate the whole world	84

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIONS FROM OLD TESTAMENT PRO- PHECIES—SCEPTICAL TESTIMONY TO CHRIS- TIANITY	89
---	----

CONTENTS.

v

CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
ARGUMENT FOR SUPERNATURALISM DERIVED FROM PHYSICAL PHENOMENA	108

CHAPTER VII.

THE MESSIANIC ATONEMENT	121
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INTRODUCTION.

HE first issue of this little work (which appeared in a pamphlet form) being now out of print, I have thought it right to prepare a second and fuller edition—the more so, as the nature of the argument has in certain quarters not been precisely apprehended, a result which was doubtless due to my own imperfect definition. I am desirous, therefore, to explain that the line of argument is somewhat different from that which has been generally followed in books on Christian Evidence, and ought not therefore to be confounded with it.

The following pages may be described as little more than a collection of *unquestioned* historic facts and writings, to the relevancy of which, the laws that regulate circumstantial evidence must be impartially applied. Most of the facts, taken

separately, are of little importance, but they derive the value which they really possess simply from the chronological position which is common to all of them. From these facts, so collocated, the *prima facie* case for Christianity is sought to be established. The rule, to which I have throughout rigidly adhered, was to prove nothing either by the New Testament writers or the early Christian authors. By selecting from the facts which are usually adduced in Christian apologetics, those only which could be proved by heathen or anti-Christian authorities, *I have eliminated from the defence everything which rested exclusively on Christian testimony*, and which might therefore be justly regarded as open to challenge. From this statement it will be seen that my position in the matter is mainly that of a mere compiler, having no pretensions either to linguistic criticism or exegetical qualifications.

The principal objections which have been raised against the Christian Evidences, so far as these are deduced from prophecy, may be thus stated : If the apologist refers to the New

Testament for proofs that Christ was the Messiah prophesied in the Old, he is at once met by Hume's argument, and by the averments of the modern schools of destructive criticism. You cannot, according to Hume, prove the miracles of Christ, because a miracle implies at the very least the suspension of a natural law. Now, no one has in our times ever seen a natural law suspended, and as the only authority that can be adduced for these alleged miraculous interferences is human testimony, which we have often known to be untrue, therefore we cannot prove that the Scripture miracles ever occurred, and the probability is indeed all against them. Besides this, it is impossible to prove that the Text of the New Testament has not been tampered with, and even our Translation may perhaps be incorrect. Hence, from Hume's point of view, and that of some modern critics, it may be said that the New Testament ceases to be of any historic value.

Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the apologist is wholly unable to meet these objections, and next proposes to compare the prophecies of the *Old* Testament with ad-

mitted historical facts, so as to endeavour to prove the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies by the admissions of sceptical or unbiassed writers. He is then met by the objection that our Version of the Old Testament is as untrustworthy as that of the New, and that the prophecies are either so obscure in themselves as to be unintelligible, or so vaguely expressed as to admit of various meanings, or that they are not Messianic in their character; nor, indeed, prophecies at all, but merely references to events contemporaneous with the writers.

After making, for argument's sake, so complete a concession as regards the New Testament, is there any more solid basis for the argument derived from the Old Testament, on which the Christian advocate can reasonably meet these last-named objections? The object of the following pages is to answer this question in the affirmative, by showing—

1°. That before Christ was born, and therefore before the New Testament was written, those prophecies were believed to be Messianic by the Jews, and widely promulgated as such among

other nations, who also accepted them as predictive of one who was to subjugate and reform the whole world.

2°. That many who lived after the time of Christ, but who rejected His claim, still continued to believe and uniformly to assert that, though in no way referable to Him, those prophecies were nevertheless Messianic. This belief formed indeed the creed of the whole Jewish nation.

3°. That the opponents of Christ, as well as many others who knew little or nothing of His claims, have admitted that certain events took place at the time He lived, which events can be shown to correspond with what the Jews confess was prophesied should occur in connection with the promised Messiah.

In this way, if the facts are sufficiently numerous to exclude the possibility of our being led astray by the merely fortuitous coincidence of one or two historic events with prophecy (a thing which is possible), we can afford to admit Hume's view as to improbability already referred to, as well as, for the purpose

of simplifying the argument, to waive the irrefragable proofs of the authenticity of the New Testament also ; and yet, after having made these concessions, we can prove, *from the admissions of sceptics*, that Jesus Christ fulfilled the description of the Messiah prophesied of in olden times.

An objector may, however, still attempt to bring Hume's views to bear against this reasoning as well as the other, by alleging that here again fallible human testimony is employed in proof of incredible miracles. But this objection can easily be shown to be groundless. I do not attempt directly to prove miracles by any such evidence ; for, with but four exceptions, all of the facts which constitute the proof are of the most commonplace character, and, if taken separately, might have occurred in the life of any man.

It is surely in no respect very wonderful, still less is it miraculous, that an ascetic should have preached repentance in the wilderness of Judea ; that a Jew should have been crucified by Pontius Pilate in the reign of the Roman Emperor

Tiberius; that a moralist should have taught both ethics and religion, and that some nations should have adopted his teaching while most of his own countrymen rejected it; that Jerusalem should have been besieged and destroyed; that its temple should have been burned; that the Jewish priesthood should have come to an end, and the ancient daily sacrifice should have ceased; and a new sect, with new rites, should have replaced it; that the Jewish kings should at last have died out; and that the great Syro-phenician nations should have passed away, leaving nothing but ruins to attest their former glory. The world's history teems with similar and more remarkable events than these which we have just named.

There are, however, as we have said, four facts in the proof, which are certainly exceptions to the commonplace character of all the others. One of these is the unparalleled transforming power of Christianity on the human race, and its widely-spread acceptance among civilised nations, though it had to oppose men's strongest and most deeply-rooted

passions, as well as the interests of the priesthood in all the nations of the world. The other facts, which are also without any counterpart in the history of the world, relate to the present state of the Jewish people. While all the surrounding nations with which they fought in ancient times (and by one of which they were driven out of their own land), have long since passed away, the Jews themselves, tracing their history from the most remote antiquity, still exist as a separate but homeless nationality; wandering over the whole world, and everywhere hated and persecuted; settling among all peoples, yet never incorporating with them, and still preserving intact their own peculiar religion. "In contradiction," says Gibbon,¹ in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, "to any known principle of the human mind, that singular people seems to have yielded a stronger and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors than to the evidence of their own senses." But we do not need any heathen or other testimony to prove these four extra-

¹ Gibbon, vol. i. p. 335.

ordinary facts, for we can see them with our own eyes at the present day.

Now, what is the sceptic to say if each one of all these different events, whether of ordinary or extraordinary character, was admitted by the rejecters and bitter haters of Christ to have been predicted, many centuries before the Christian era, in connection with ONE MAN CALLED THE MESSIAH; and farther, that these events are also proved by the same hostile testimony to have actually culminated or taken their rise at one and the same time—the time of THE ADVENT OF CHRIST? Nor must it be forgotten that the simultaneous fulfilment of many of these predicted events was in the highest degree improbable, if it did not indeed involve apparent contradictions, which, without the light thrown upon them by the history of Christ's life, were incapable of reconciliation. "Nothing but inspiration," says Apthorpe,¹ "could have combined so discordant ideas as concur in the divine and human character of Christ." Or, as Bishop Chandler says—"To connect these

¹ *Discourses on Prophecy*, vol. ii. p. 45. London, 1786.

disjointed passages into one regular system, and to reconcile the seemingly opposite ideas of the Messias in the same person, was almost impossible, before they saw how exactly our Lord Jesus answered to them all.”¹

It is this wondrous combination in one point of history, of all these, in themselves non-miraculous events, that constitutes, as it appears to me, the irresistible proof of miracle. Just as the sun's rays are, by the interposition of a parabolic mirror, converged by reflection to its focus, so, by an invisible and mysterious agency, those numerous ancient predictions have in their fulfilment been focussed in Christ Jesus as their common centre. “In the person and work of Jesus Christ are realised the aspirations of an entire literature, extending over a space of a thousand years. Its predictions receive in Him their fulfilment, its types their realisation. He constitutes the ideal to which the whole system pointed.”²

It must not be overlooked that the line of

¹ Chandler's *Defence of Christianity*, p. x. London, 1728.

² Row's *Christian Evidences*, p. 255. London, 1877.

argument, as restricted, precludes us, as we have already said, from making any use of the important evidence for Christ's claims derivable from the New Testament taken in connection with the Old. But even by the restricted line which has been adopted, we establish, it appears to me, a proof of the divine authority of the Old Testament as we have it, and as the Jews of the present day now read it in their synagogues, and as the early Jewish writers expounded it. And, this point once gained, we should, I think, be justified in giving similar weight to the record of the New Testament which follows it up with corroboration. But this need not be done, and is not done in these pages.

If the limitation which we have adopted materially weakens the case for Supernaturalism, by excluding a large class of facts most relevant to the question, it secures on the other hand the advantages of simplicity and brevity. But what is of more value, it enables us to steer clear of many objections, to which certain parts of the ordinary line of argument are open. Indeed, I am unable to see that there is any

part of the defence as restricted, which is challengeable, or ever can be, on rational grounds.

I am very far, however, from supposing, even for a moment, that what follows will prove satisfactory to some readers; for there are without doubt certain minds that seem to be prepossessed by a rigid determination, at all hazards and in the face of all evidence to the contrary, summarily and without any inquiry to reject the supernatural, and everything that is not explicable by visible and material processes—that is, in short, not of the earth, earthy. To such minds I quite believe that it is in vain to appeal. But I trust I shall be excused for observing that this mode of dealing with evidence is hardly consistent with a scientific profession, which ought to compel every man to place in abeyance his preconceived opinions, and boldly and impartially to face all records that are appealed to in any inquiry, and which in this case form really no more than a CHAPTER OF SECULAR HISTORY.

It is no doubt true that some persons may at first sight think we should have been supplied

with demonstrations of the truth of Christianity as plain and undeniable as those of geometry and algebra, and that these demonstrations should have embraced the whole creed that is required of man. Whereas that evidence is not of the nature of mathematical demonstration, and covers only a part of the Christian's confession of faith. But this merely human view is of no avail, for God has decreed it otherwise ; and, so long as we are not behind the scenes, He calls on us to exercise faith regarding certain matters. What is given us, moreover, is only sufficient to satisfy an unbiassed, or at least a candid mind, *i.e.*, a *genuine* freethinker. For such a mind, this sufficiency of evidence for some matters, will generate faith to enable him to take on trust others which emanate from the same Divine source.

But this measure of proof will altogether fail in the case of a man who is full of preconceived opinions about matters of which none of us have had any personal experience—who is environed with a *chevaux de frise* of his own self-created postulates and axioms, and who is, therefore,

not free to adopt any other conclusions than those to which he has already pledged himself before entering on his inquiry. To the man of narrow science, who cannot see beyond his own appreciations, as well as to the natural moralist, or him who takes his own moral feelings for authority, and makes them the basis of a personal religion—altogether his own,—incommunicable and unsusceptible of proof *ab extra*, any such evidence is unavailing.

In short, while the true freethinker is open to all arguments, the *quack* freethinker, who is really a bigot, though he may not think he is so, has shut the door against everything that runs counter to his preconceived theories and axioms, one of which is the negation of supernaturalism, and all belief in that Unseen Universe of powers and influences which lies beyond the sphere of ordinary terrestrial experience.

In making these remarks I do not forget that a similar intolerance of argument and spirit of bigotry are to be found on the orthodox side as well as on the other. Indeed, it is perhaps

scarcely possible for any mind, however honest in intention, to preserve strict impartiality, especially where the issues are so momentous. But all strong bias, on whichever side it is found, should of course be guarded against, as it is unfavourable to the free reception of truth.

There will be found, in addition to this inquiry, some remarks on the physical argument adopted by Professors Babbage, Balfour Stewart, and Tait, as to Unseen Powers, with a concluding chapter on the doctrine of the Atonement by the Messiah, which seems to be so repugnant to many inquirers after truth.



CHAPTER I.

PROPHECY OF THE ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH ADMITTED BY THE JEWS TO HAVE BEEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.



THE object aimed at in the following pages is, as already stated, simply to collect together certain Jewish and Heathen records that relate to the Predictions of a Messiah, so as to show, from writers who were hostile to Christianity, or who were unacquainted with its teaching, that those predictions were widely known, before the Advent of Jesus Christ, and were fulfilled in His person. In accordance with this plan neither the New Testament nor any Christian writer, though sometimes quoted in collateral illustration, will ever be founded on as an authority.

Whatever view is taken as to the supernatural origin claimed for the books of the Old Testament, or as to the precise dates at which

they were written, all admit that they are of very high antiquity. No one disputes that part, if not all, of the Old Testament had, more than two centuries before Christ, been translated into Greek, when Ptolemy Soter and Ptolemy Philadelphus were kings of Egypt;¹ This Greek version, called the "Septuagint" (because sanctioned by the Sanhedrim of seventy or seventy-two elders at Jerusalem), was made for those Jews who lived among the Greeks, and who had learned to speak their language; and thus some knowledge of the Old Testament is generally believed to have been communicated to other nations than the Jews.

Though different meanings have been ascribed by modern critics to those portions of the Old Testament which appear to be prophetic, there cannot be a doubt that the Jews themselves believed they contained prophecies that a great personage, called "the Messiah," was ultimately to come into the world, and complete the glory of the Jewish nation. Immediately

¹ *Vide* Josephus; also Angus' *Bible Handbook*, p. 9, and Garrett's *Bampton Lecture*, p. 146.

before the Christian era these hopes culminated in the general expectation that He, of whom ancient prophets had written, was about to come. The present Bishop of Carlisle says, "Somehow or another the literature of the Jewish church was felt to centre in One Man, centuries before Christ came. . . . If you take that literature by itself, you find it leaving off suddenly with, as it were, a finger-post pointing across the waste of time, and pointing to no one; but when you look at that literature as supplemented by the Christian Scriptures, you find that the finger-post of Malachi points to Jesus Christ."¹ As remarked also by Lord President Forbes of Culloden, "Daniel had fixed a determined time for the advent of the Messiah; the whole nation knew it, and expected Him about the time He came."²

Hengstenberg remarks as to Daniel's prophecy of the Advent, "Now if we turn to history it must strike the most prejudiced mind as a very remarkable fact, that *of all the current*

¹ *Credentials of Christianity*, 1876.

² Forbes' *Works*, vol. i. p. 83. No date.

chronological calculations in relation to this period of time, there is not a single one whose results differ more than ten years from the statements of the prophecy. But on a closer examination of these calculations, we find that the one which has the greatest probabilities in its favour fully establishes the agreement of prophecy and history even to a single year.”¹

JOSEPHUS,² the Jewish historian (A.D. 93), says “We believe that Daniel conversed with God, for he did not only prophecy of future events, as did the other prophets, but he also determined the time of their accomplishment.” . . . “The several books that he wrote and left behind him are still read by us till this time.”

The views of the Jewish nation at that time are thus stated by Renan,³ the well known French sceptic : “The revolution, or, in other words, the belief in the Messiah, caused here (in Galilee) a general fermentation. Men deemed themselves on the eve of the great renovation ; the Scriptures, tortured into divers meanings,

¹ Hengstenberg, vol. iii. p. 223.

² Josephus' *Antiq.*, Book x. c. 11, 7.

³ Renan's *Life of Jesus*, cap. iv. Trübner and Co. 1877.

fostered the most colossal hopes." . . . "Expectation was at its height in Judea at the time that Jesus came upon the earth." . . . "A gigantic dream," he farther says, "haunted for centuries the Jewish people, constantly renewing its youth in its decrepitude."

The author of *Jesus of Nazara*, who will not be charged with any leaning towards the orthodox interpretation of Scripture, gives the following digest of history :—

"In the separation of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel (B.C. 975), in the decline of Israel, and in the decay of Judah under David's posterity, there sprang up, and from the ninth century, from the times of the prophets Amos and Hosea, and then in the eighth century, in the times of Isaiah and Micah, there grew continually stronger, the hope that God would raise up once more 'the fallen tabernacle of David;' that He would plant upon Zion a branch from the stem of Jesse which had been cut down, from the top of the high cedar which had been broken off; that out of Bethlehem, out of the house of David, the king of Israel, there should come forth, adorned with the name of God, and with the mysterious title of Eternal, a gatherer together of the people, a conqueror of the Gentiles, the world's prince of peace, the planter of knowledge and righteousness. At the beginning of the Asiatic captivity, at the end of all hope (B.C. 588), Jeremiah and Ezekiel persisted in the assertion that

in the seed of David, in the righteous branch, the redemption of the nation was at hand. The long exile, the weakness of the colony that returned to the land of their fathers under the Persian king Cyrus (B.C. 536), the decayed condition of the family of David, which with difficulty asserted itself in Zerubbabel, weakened faith in the old royal house, but not faith in the future of Israel. . . . Faith in the house of David disappears in Malachi, the last prophet; but the Lord Himself will come to execute judgment, to inhabit His temple, to establish His covenant and His kingdom, and will have as His forerunner the Prophet promised by Moses (Deut. xviii. 15), the heavenly Elijah, the man of incomparable power, an establisher of peace, a preparer of Israel for the coming of the Great King."¹

The ancient JEWISH TARGUMS, extending, as is generally held, from B.C. 40 to a date comparatively recent, furnish abundant evidence of the Jewish belief in a coming Messiah. The Targums are Jewish translations or interpretations (written in Chaldee) of most of those Old Testament writings which were in the Hebrew tongue. Joseph Frey, a modern converted Jew, states that the name of "Messiah" is used from sixty to seventy times in these Targums.² Buxtorf says that the name of

¹ *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. pp. 315-16.

² *Joseph and Benjamin*, vol. i. p. 195. Lond. 1837.

"Messiah" occurs in the Targums of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, Ruth, Psalms, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, and Zechariah.

Dr. Robert Young of Edinburgh, the well-known Hebrew scholar, says—"In the early ages of Christianity the question between Jews and Christians was much narrower than it is at present. The dispute then was simply, Is Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah or not? *No one ever thought of questioning the truth that a great deliverer—the Messiah—was promised from the beginning of time by God himself.*" "To all countries of the world, whither they were scattered, they carried this precious doctrine along with them, and so late as the year 1180 it was formally enrolled by Maimonides among the thirteen fundamental articles of the Jewish faith, in these words :—' I believe, with a perfect faith, in the coming of Messiah ; and although He may tarry nevertheless I will look for Him.'"
Dr. Young says, farther, of the Chaldee Targums — "Written at a very remote period,

without any reference to Christianity, such is the Messianic feeling with which they are pervaded that there are no less than seventy-two references in them to the coming Deliverer, and in which he is uniformly denominated the Messiah. . . . The Jews understood all the more important passages that Christians quote from the Old Testament, in the Jewish controversy, just as we now do.”¹

J. S. Frey, in his *Joseph and Benjamin* (vol. i. p. 149), says that Maimonides, on the Mishna ‘*Sanhedrim*,’ calls the belief in Messiah a fundamental article. The substance of his words is as follows:—“The 12th article is the Messiah, *i.e.* to wait and believe that He is to come, etc., according as all the prophets did prophesy, from Moses even to Malachi; and whosoever doubts it, or mistrusts His excellency, it is as much as if he had denied the law, and he hath no share in the future world. . . . At the blessing after every meal they said, ‘God make us worthy of seeing the days of Messiah.’” A Jewish book of prayers, published

¹ *Christology of the Targums*. Edinburgh, 1850.

at London in 1859,¹ contains the following, in language almost the same as Maimonides':—
 "I believe with a perfect faith that the Messiah will come; and although His coming be delayed, I will still patiently wait His speedy appearance."
 Hermann Adler, minister of the Bayswater Synagogue, in a sermon preached in 1869, says, "All those various prophecies, which shine like orient pearls in the inspired pages of holy writ, speak of a Redeemer who *will* come, but who has not yet appeared upon earth."

Quotations from the writings of the early Jewish Rabbis.

MAIMONIDES.—"Prophets and holy men have vehemently desired the days of the Messiah."²

JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL? (A.D. 40).—"Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is superior to that of the sons of men; the spirit of prophecy is given into Thy lips, therefore the Lord hath blessed Thee for ever. Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou mighty One, to slay kings with princes for Thy glory and Majesty."³

"Thou wilt prolong the days of King Messiah, (and) his

¹ *The Form of Daily Prayers*, p. 52. By Isaac L. Lyon. H. Abraham: London, A.M. 5619.

² Robinson, *Evangelists and Mishna*, p. 217. Lond. 1859.

³ Young's *Christology of the Targums*, p. 17.

years as the generations of this world and the generations of the world to come."¹

JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL.—“At that time the Messiah of the Lord shall be for joy and for glory.”²

“Peace shall be multiplied upon us in His (Messiah’s) days.”³

“In the days of the Messiah of Israel peace shall be multiplied in the earth, the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, etc.”⁴

“At that time the Messiah of the Lord of Hosts shall be for a crown of joy, and for a diadem of praise to the residue of His people.”⁵

“Behold the man ; Messiah is His name.”⁶

PSEUDO JONATHAN (A.D. 500?).—“King Messiah shall be revealed in the end of the days.”⁷

“King Messiah, who is hereafter to deliver the house of Israel in the end of the days.”⁸

“The jubilee of King Messiah is proclaimed among them (the house of Israel) ;⁹ even to the days of King Messiah thou shalt not forget.”¹⁰

R. KIMCHI concurred with the Chaldee paraphrast on Is. iv. 2.—“In that time there shall be the Messiah of Jehovah for joy and preciousness.”¹¹

“Israel shall call the Messiah by this name, The Lord our righteousness.”¹²

R. ABARBANEL (born A.D. 1437, died 1508).—“This

¹ Young’s *Christology of the Targums*, p. 17. ² *Ibid.* p. 23.

³ *Ibid.* p. 23. ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 24. ⁵ *Ibid.* p. 26. ⁶ *Ibid.* p. 34.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 7. ⁸ *Ibid.* p. 8. ⁹ *Ibid.* p. 9. ¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 10.

¹¹ Hengst., vol. ii. p. 13.

¹² *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 417.

teacher of righteousness, however," (referring to the passage in Joel) "is the King Messiah, who will show the way in which we must walk, and the works which we must do."¹

On Jer. xxx. 9. "This is King Messiah, who is of the house of David, and is therefore called by His name."²

On Dan. vii. 13-14. "The expositors explain these words, 'Like a son of man,' as referring to the King Messiah."³

JERUSALEM TARGUM (A.D. 600?).—"There shall be a remedy for the children of the woman; but for thee, O serpent, there shall be no remedy, for hereafter they shall to each other perform a healing in the heel, in the latter end of the days, in the days of King Messiah."⁴

R. D. KIMCHI (on Psalm 2d.).—"Our fathers of blessed memory interpreted it of King Messiah."⁵

BERESHITH RABBA (circa A.D. 300).—"Our masters have delivered to us that the blessed God said to Messiah the son of David, who is soon to be revealed in our days, 'Ask of me, etc., thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.'"⁶

R. BARACHIAS.—"The God whom I raise up to you has also no father; as we read in Zech. vi. 12.

"Behold there is a man, by name Zemach (*i.e.* Sprout), he will shoot forth under himself, and, as it is also stated in Is. liii., 'He springeth up before him as a plant.'"⁷

ECHA RABBATI, says—"Zemach is introduced under the name of the Messiah."⁸

¹ Hengst., vol. i. p. 324.

² *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 424.

³ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 87. ⁴ Young's *Christology of the Targums*, p. 2.

⁵ Robinson's *Evangelists and Mishna*, p. 44. ⁶ *Ibid.* p. 44.

⁷ Hengst., iii. p. 362.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 331.

28 MESSIANIC BELIEF OF THE JEWS.

BEN SIRA mentions among the other names of Messiah, "Wonderful, Counsellor, El Gibbor, Prince of Peace."¹

TALMUD, IN SANHEDRIM (fol. 38).—"King Sapor said to Rabbi Samuel, 'You say that the Messiah will come on an ass. I will send Him my splendid horse.'"—Zech. ix. 9.²

BOOK OF SOHAR (circa A.D. 120), remarks on the words "I see Him, but not now,"—"This was in part fulfilled at that time; it will be completely fulfilled in the days of Messiah."³

TALMUD, IN SANHEDRIM (c. 11).—"If the Israelites are worthy, the Messiah will come with the clouds of heaven. If they are not worthy He will come poor, and riding upon an ass."⁴

RABBI MOSES HADARSAN.—"In this place (Gen. xli.) Jehovah signifies nothing else but Messiah."⁵

TALMUD, ON TAANITH, from Is. xxv. 9.—"At that time God would be pointed at, and shown even with the finger."⁶

RABBI HAKKADOSH (about A.D. 150), commenting upon Jer. xxiii. 7, "He shall be called Jehovah our righteousness," remarks, "There are two births or filiations in Messiah, the one whereby He shall be the son of God, and the other whereby He shall be the son of a virgin, whom Isaiah (chap. viii.) calleth the prophetess."⁶

PHILO, an *Egyptian Jew*, who was contemporary with

¹ Hengst., vol. ii. p. 93.

² *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 405.

³ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 91.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 414.

⁵ *Voice of Israel*, vol. ii. p. 71.

⁶ *Voice of Israel*, from Father Persons, p. 124; vol. ii. p. 91. Lond. 1847.

Christ, says, referring to Numbers xxiv. 7, "as the oracle saith, A man shall go forth, and warring against great and populous nations, shall overcome them . . . this man shall extend his conquest for the good of the conquered, so as to be the strength of the empire . . . and the head of all mankind."¹

R. MOSES ALPALASI.—"His (Messiah's) name shall endure for ever. Before the sun Jinnon was His name, and in Him shall they be blessed."²

R. SAMUEL BAR NACHMAN.—"The Righteous Branch, that is the Messiah."³

R. SOLOMON BEN VIRGA.—"Six thousand years shall the world stand. Two thousand years it will be empty or without the law; two thousand years under the law; and two thousand years will be the days of the Messias."²

R. ASE.—"Do not look for the Messias until the last Jubilee. After that expect Him."²

False Messiahs.

The appearance of a long series of impostors, each of whom claimed to be the Messiah, forms another and most conclusive proof of the expectations of the Jews. Josephus tells us of some of these; and Bishop Kidder³ gives biographical

¹ Chandler's *Defence*, p. 26. Lond. 1728.

² Oxlee's *Letters to Archbishop of Canterbury*. Hatchard and Son, Lond.

³ Kidder's *Demonstration of Messias*, part iii. p. 166. Lond. 1726.

sketches of not fewer than twenty-four such claimants who appeared after the destruction of Jerusalem, and some of whom lived at so late a date as A.D. 1682. So certain of the Advent were the Jews of those days, that, for a time at least, they believed in each of these impostors, some of whom they actually crowned as King Messiah. "How widely," says Hengstenberg, "this opinion was spread among the Jews is sufficiently apparent from the circumstance that the renowned Pseudo Messiah, in the time of Hadrian, with a reference to the passage—a star goeth out of Jacob (Numb. xxiv.), took the surname of Barcocheba, *i.e.* Son of the star."

It is farther remarkable, that until near the expiry of Daniel's weeks of years "history says nothing of the false Messiahs."¹

We have thus, then, superabundantly proved that whatever may be the views of some of the modern Jews, their forefathers held as a National creed that a Messiah was promised, and was to appear as a man upon the earth.

¹ Prideaux, vol. ii. p. 175. Lond. 1808.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC PROPHECY WAS
KNOWN TO THE HEATHEN WORLD.



E go on to the testimony of wholly disinterested, as well as of heathen writers who were hostile to Christianity, some of whom dimly, but others more clearly, asserted that a grand new era was to begin, and that the whole world was to be reformed.

ZOROASTER (date unknown, but supposed B. C. 600), teaches in his book *Zendavesta* (Word of Life), "Afterwards Osideberga will manifest himself to the inhabitants of the world, promote righteousness, destroy iniquity, and restore the ancient order of things. Kings shall obey Him, and all His undertakings shall prosper. He will give the victory to true religion. In His time rest and peace shall prevail, all dissensions cease, and all grievances be done away."¹

¹ *The Messiah, as predicted in the Pentateuch and Psalms*, by J. R. Wolfe, p. lxxxi. London and Glasgow, 1855. Hengstenberg's *Christology of the Old Testament*, Meyer's Translation, vol. iv. p. 279. Edinburgh, 1856.

32 HEATHEN BELIEF IN THE MESSIAH.

ABULFARAJ (*Historia Dynastiarum*, p. 54), says "That Zoroaster taught that in the last times a virgin would conceive without intercourse with a man, and at the period of the birth of her child a bright star would appear by day, with the sign of the virgin in the centre, and that on its appearance his disciples would arise to worship the child and bring him their presents. This is the word that founded the heaven."¹

CONFUCIUS (B.C. 551), in the sacred book *Tshoung-young*: "A great Holy One, who shall appear in the latter days, to whom nations look forward as fading flowers thirst for rain. He shall be born of a virgin; whose name shall be (Ven-vang) Prince of Peace. It shall be the prerogative of that 'most holy one'—the holy one of all ages and nations—to unite all rays of wisdom, and to attain to the perfection of all virtues. His all-penetrating spirit, his prudence, virtues, and counsels, shall govern the world without the prestige of power. The nobility of his soul, his magnanimity and humility will unite all interests and win all hearts. The nations seeing him shall prostrate themselves before him, and hearing him they shall be convinced, and with one voice praise his works. The whole world shall re-echo with the praise of his name and glory. China shall see the rays of his glory approaching, which shall penetrate even to the savage nations and to the unapproachable wildernesses, or there where no ship can reach."²

Passing to more recent and better authenti-

¹ Hengst., vol. iv. p. 281.

² *The Messiah, as predicted in the Pentateuch and Psalms*, p. lxxx. J. R. Wolfe. London and Glasgow, 1855.

cated writers, we find that SUETONIUS, the Roman historian, in his *Lives of the Cæsars*, relates that a few months before the birth of Augustus, *which took place sixty-one years before Christ*, "there happened at Rome a prodigy, by which was signified that Nature was in travail with a king for the Roman people, and that the Senate in alarm came to the resolution that no child born in that year should be brought up." (Cap. xciv.)

PLUTARCH (*De Iside et Osiride*, c. 47).—"The god of the lower world will eventually be utterly deprived of his power, and then men will be happy, and will no longer stand in need of nourishment or throw a shadow."¹

The poet VIRGIL, in his celebrated fourth Eclogue, which, according to Gibbon, *was written 40 years before Christ*,² indicates that the last age, as prophesied, was to begin; a child was to come from heaven, a dear offspring of the gods, and Jove's great descendant, and the golden age was to arise over the whole world. The last traces of sin were to disappear; and while the world was to be peace-

¹ Hengst., vol. iv. p. 278.

² Gibbon, vol. i. p. 552.

ful, the earth was without cultivation to bring forth its fruits, and the vine without pruning-hook its grapes. The cattle were not to fear the lion, and the serpent and all poisonous plants were to die out, amid general rejoicing at the new age about to come upon the earth.

On this point Gibbon says—"If the fourth Eclogue contributed to the conversion of the first Christian emperor (Constantine), Virgil may deserve to rank amongst the most successful missionaries of the gospel." Gibbon also mentions that this poem was a paraphrase of well-known passages in Isaiah and Micah, relating to the coming of the Messiah. The following quotations from the Old Testament will show the connection between the heathen Messiah and the Messiah of Scripture :—

"To us a child is born, to us a son is given : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and

the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them : ” “ And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den.” “ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw as the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.” “ Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.” “ The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.”

TACITUS, the Roman historian, in a very important passage, which has been often quoted, says—“The majority were deeply impressed with a persuasion that it was contained in the ancient writings of the priests that it would come to pass at that very time that the East should renew its strength, and they that should go forth from Judea should be rulers of the world. Mysterious words, which foreshadowed Vespasian and Titus. But the people (the Jews), according to the usual course of human fond-

ness, interpreting this consummation of destiny as referring to themselves, were not induced to abandon their error even by affliction."¹

This general persuasion, extending to the Romans, is thus shown to have *existed before the time of Vespasian, who was born A.D. 10.*

To the like purpose is the testimony of SUETONIUS, who, in his *Life of Vespasian*,² says—"A firm persuasion had long prevailed through all the East that it was fated for the empire of the world at that time to devolve on some who should go forth from Judea. This prediction referred to a Roman emperor, as the event showed; but the Jews, applying it to themselves, broke out into rebellion."

We may also adduce the testimony of JOSEPHUS, who, though himself a Jew, did not, as appears from his statement, share in the view which led his own nation into rebellion, that this prophecy related to the Jews, but applied it to Vespasian; apparently because that Roman had been appointed em-

¹ Tacitus, lib. v. c. 15.

² Suetonius, *Vit. Vesp.*, c. iv.

peror of Judea, and had conferred property on him in land. Josephus was regarded, indeed, as a traitor by his countrymen. He says, "Now, what did most elevate them [the Jews] in undertaking this war [against the Romans] was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their Sacred Writings, 'how about that time one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.' The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now, this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea."¹

"The polished writers of the Augustan age," says Apthorpe, "and of that which succeeded it, are full of these ideas. Cicero, Sallust, Virgil, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio, applied these prophecies to the great personages of their respective times—to Ptolemy, to Lentulus, to Julius, to Augustus, to Marcellus."²

The quotations we have given from the

¹ Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.*, lib. vi. cap. v.

² Apthorpe, vol. i. p. 356.

38 HEATHEN BELIEF IN THE MESSIAH.

writings of men, none of whom accepted Christianity, prove beyond doubt the Jewish belief in a Messiah that was to come ; and that, shortly before the birth of Christ, the Jewish nation was in the immediate expectation of His advent, and also that this belief of a Coming One had deeply impressed itself on the heathen world as well.



CHAPTER III.

HEATHEN TESTIMONY AS TO THE FACT OF CHRIST'S
EXISTENCE, AND THE MANNER, TIME, AND PLACE
OF HIS DEATH ; AND ALSO THAT HE CLAIMED
TO BE THE MESSIAH.



THE kind of argument which we are at present employing precludes us, as we have said, from founding anything on the New Testament history of the miracles of Christ as proofs of His Messiahship. And therefore, for the sake of argument, we shall admit to the fullest extent the cogency of Hume's reasoning, that it is more probable human testimony should err than that the laws of nature should be suspended. We may here observe, however, in passing, that this celebrated argument does not so much exclude the possibility of miracles as the possibility of proving them. It should also be kept in mind that if

40 HEATHEN TESTIMONY AS TO CHRIST.

Christ were no more than a carpenter's son, and never worked any miracles, it is not easy to see how such a man as Saul of Tarsus was converted, or how the world's chronology came to be changed to *Anno Domini* among almost all the civilised nations of the world, and how the one day in seven came to be changed from Saturday, the commemoration of the Creation, to Sunday, the commemoration of the Resurrection. Nor yet, farther, can we account for the triumphant spread of Christianity in the world. We are, however, not only precluded by the terms of our argument from founding anything on Christ's miracles, but are also obliged to forego all claims based on the startling agreement between the Old Testament Prophetical Writings, as still read in the Jewish synagogues, and the subsequent life and death of Christ, as narrated in the Gospels.

Under these restrictions we proceed to assert that, as a matter of history, there was such a person as Jesus Christ, and that he was put to death in Judea in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. In proof of this we cite TACITUS, the Roman

historian, who says,¹ "Hence, to suppress the rumour (that the Emperor Nero had ordered the conflagration of Rome), he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians. Chrestus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius."

Gibbon, though questioning Tacitus' means of information, says, in reference to the whole passage from which the above is taken, "The most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius. . . the latter may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts, by the inimitable character of the style of Tacitus, by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud, and by the purport of his narrative."²

LUCIAN, A.D. 160, who, from his alleged

¹ *Ann.* lib. xv. c. 45.

² Gibbon, *Hist.*, vol. i. p. 393.

impiety, though that charge does not appear to be well established, was called "the blasphemer,"¹ says, "They, therefore, still worship that great man who was crucified in Palestine, because he introduced into the world this new religion."²

We do not in any way depart from the principle with which we started if we now turn to the authors of the New Testament to ascertain what claims were made by its writers for the Messiahship of Christ ; for, of course, if they had asserted that *He* had repudiated the title, as they say John the Baptist did, then all our arguments would go for nothing. Now we find it alleged that He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." "I am the Son of God." "I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth on Me shall never die." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ;" and Jesus said,

¹ *Testimony of the Heathen to the Truths of Holy Writ*, p. xxv. T. Millington. Lond. 1863.

² Lucian, *De Mort. Pereg.*, c. 11 ; Lardner, vol. viii. p. 71. .

“Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.” The woman of Samaria said, “I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ : when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He.” “All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth.” “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations.” “I am the light of the world.” “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” “Pilate said, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” “Search the Scriptures . . they are they which testify of Me.” “Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me.”

"All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." "Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the son of God." "I am not come of myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not, but I know Him, for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me." "As the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son giveth life to whom He will." "For the father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." "Dost thou believe in the Son of God? Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? Thou hast both seen Him, and He it is that talketh with thee." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "O Father, glorify thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

These assertions of the New Testament as to the claims made by Christ are also confirmed by heathen testimony ; for PLINY, A.D. 106,¹ says, "The early Christians sing in turn among themselves a hymn to Christ *as to a God* ;" and CELSUS, A.D. 170, says, "He," (Jesus) "set Himself up *as a God*," and that His followers "esteemed him a Saviour, and *the Son* and messenger of the most High God ;" and, again, "You will have him to be a *God* who ended an infamous life with a miserable death ;" "The Son of God wanders about, cringing like a necessitous beggar." LUCIAN, A.D. 160—"They have renounced the gods of the Greeks, and *worship* that Master of theirs who was crucified." (*De Mort. Pereg.* c. 13.)²

We see then that the existence of Christ, and the nature, time, and place of His death, have all been admitted by Heathen writers.

¹ Plin. *Epist.*, lib. x. Ep. 97.

² Lardner, vol. viii. pp. 19, 27, 41.

CHAPTER IV.

PROPHECIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ACCEPTED AS MESSIANIC IN THE JEWISH TARGUMS AND WRIT- INGS.



ACCORDING to Dr. Angus,¹ there are in the Old Testament “upwards of *one hundred* predictions all referring to the work or person of our Lord,” and these are taken from twenty-nine different books.² We shall restrict ourselves to the following, because Jewish or heathen writers prove that all of them were fulfilled, either in Christ’s person or in the history of the Jewish and heathen nations after His advent. We shall also show from the Targums and other writings that these Messianic predictions were held as such by the early Jews.

I. *A messenger was to be sent to prepare the way
for the Messiah.*

ISAIAH xl. 3.—“The voice of Him that crieth in the

¹ *Bible Handbook*, p. 95.

² *The Supernatural in Nature*, p. 469. Lond. 1878.

wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 5. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

MALACHI iii. 1.—"Behold, I will send My messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: He shall come saith the Lord of Hosts."

MALACHI iv. 5.—"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

TRYPHO, *Dialog. c. Tryphone*, c. 40, says—"We all expect that the Messiah will be born a man of men, and that Elias will anoint Him when He comes."¹

RABBI ISAAC.—"It was well known in the nation of Israel that the Messiah would not be manifested till Elias the prophet had come, as we find from this passage (in Malachi)."¹

SEDER HAGGADA.—*The Book of the Paschal Rites*, p. 33. ed. Rittangel.—"At the Paschal feast, to fix deeply the remembrance of His coming at this time, a man personates the Messias, and, bursting open the door suddenly, rides into the room upon an ass; and another, like Elias, goes after him with a horn to proclaim and anoint him, and this to represent how that Messias shall enter into Jerusalem."²

TARGUM OF JONATHAN.—"The Lord shall gather thee

¹ Hengstenberg, vol. iv. p. 220.

² Chandler's *Defence*, p. 87.

by the ministry of Elias, and conduct you by the hands of King Messias."¹

MAIMONIDES, *Gem. Sanh.*, p. 377.—“This is certain, that a prophet shall arise before the coming of the Messias, which some of the wise men conceive shall be Elias himself.”²

RABBI TANCHUMA, in his notes on Malachi.—“Here is a promise of the manifestation of a prophet in Israel, a little before the appearance of the Messias, whom some of the learned would have to be Elias the Tishbite. But others, and among them the great doctor Maimonides, think this prophet shall be of equal degree with Elias for the knowledge of God and reverence of His holy name, and is therefore called Elias.”³

SHEKALIM, ii. 5. BABHA METSIA, iii. 4.—“‘Leave it till Elias come.’ This was a common saying in regard to any doubtful matter.”⁴

JEWISH PASSOVER SERVICE (before filling the fourth cup).—“All are now in profound silence expecting the Prophet Elijah to make his appearance as the harbinger of Messiah, and consequently as a sign of their restoration. The doors are opened as if to welcome his visit.”⁴

The fact that such a forerunner of Christ actually appeared is proved by the following authorities :—

JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 18, cap. v.

¹ Chandler's *Defence*, p. 66.

² *Ibid.* p. 234.

³ *Ibid.* p. 234.

⁴ *Evangelists and Mishna*, pp. 100, 149.

—"Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John that was called the *Baptist*; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism, for that the washing (with water) would be acceptable to Him if they made use of it not in order to the putting away (or the remission) of some sins (only), but for the purification of the body, supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when (many) others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved (or pleased) by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best by putting him to death to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death."

JOSIPPON, the Jew (circa A.D. 800 or 900), says, "He" (Herod) "even slew Jochanan, the high priest, because the latter had said to him, 'It is not lawful for thee to marry thy brother Philip's wife.' Therefore he slew Jochanan the Baptist."¹

¹ Reynolds' *John the Baptist*, 2d ed. p. 54. London, 1876. Josipp. sive J. ben Gorion *Hist. Jud.*, 1706, lib. vi.

RENAN, *Life of Jesus*.—"The prophet Malachi, whose opinion in this matter was soon brought to bear (Mal. iii. and iv., Ecclesiasticus xlviii. 10.), who was to prepare men for the final renovation, a messenger who should come to make straight the paths before the elevated one of God." "It" (the belief that two ancient prophets were to rise again as the precursors of the Messiah) "formed at the time of Jesus an integral portion of the Jewish theories about the Messiah."¹

2. *The Messiah was to appear in Judea.*

NUM. xxiv. 17.—"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

ISA. ix. 1.—"Afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."

ISA. ix. 6.—"For *unto us* a child is born, *unto us* a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

ISA. xi. 10.—"In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious."

MICAH v. 2.—"But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of

¹ Renan, cap. xii. p. 154.

thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

TARGUM OF ONKELOS, (A.D. 40).—Numb. xxiv. "Who saw the vision of the Almighty, prostrate when he saw: I see Him, but not now: I behold Him, but not nigh: when a king shall arise out of Jakob, and the Meshiha be anointed from Israel." Deut. xviii.—"I will raise up to them a Prophet from among them, like unto thee, and I will put my words of prophecy upon his lips."¹

TARGUM OF JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL.—"The prophet said to the house of David, For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given: and He shall receive the law upon Him to keep it: and His name is called from eternity Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Continuing for ever, the Messiah; for peace shall be multiplied upon us in his days. . . . But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, thou hast been little to be counted among the thousands of the house of Judah; yet out of thee shall come forth before me Messiah, to exercise dominion over Israel; whose name is spoken of from of old, from the days of eternity. Their king shall be anointed from them, and their Messiah from the midst of them shall be revealed. And there shall go forth a King from the sons of Jesse, and Messiah shall be anointed from his children's children."²

TARGUM OF PSEUDO-JONATHAN, A.D. 500.—"Edar,

¹ *Targums of Onkelos*, J. W. Etheridge, pp. 309, 516. Lond. 1865.

² Dr. Young's *Christology of the Targums*, pp. 23, 32, 29, 24, 6, 5, 3.

the place whence hereafter King Messiah shall be revealed in the end of the days." Bishop Kidder, in his *Demonstration of the Messias*, p. 21, says, "One of the ancients tells us that the tower of Edar is the place of the shepherds, near unto Bethlehem."

TARGUM OF JERUSALEM, A.D. 600.—"Their King shall arise from their children, and their Redeemer from among themselves. The kingdom of King Messiah shall become great. How fair is King Messiah, who is hereafter to arise from the house of Judah."

ZOCHAR, by R. BEN JOCHAI (died A.D. 120).—"King Messiah will reveal himself in the land of Galilee."¹

TARGUM JONATHAN.—"There shall come forth a King from the children of Jesse, and a Messiah from the sons of his sons shall become great."²

R. ABARBANEL (born A.D. 1437).—"The goings out of the family from which that ruler (Micah v. 1) is to be descended are of old and the days of eternity, *i. e.* of the seed of David and the rod of Jesse, which is of Bethlehem-Judah."³

R. JARCHI.—"From thee (Beth-lehem Ephratah) shall come forth to me Messiah, the son of David, of whom 'it is said, 'The stone which the builders rejected,'"⁴ etc.

R. SOLOMON JARCHI.—"From thee (Bethlehem) shall go forth to me the Messias, the son of David."⁵

¹ Hengstenberg, vol. ii. p. 75.

² *Ibid.* p. 97.

³ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 489.

⁴ Robinson's *Evangelists and Mishna*, p. 198.

⁵ Oxlee, vol. ii. p. 284.

We have before shown that the predictions cited by JOSEPHUS, A.D. 93 ; TACITUS, A.D. 100 ; SUETONIUS, A.D. 110, and supposed by them to have referred to Vespasian, all distinctly declared that the dominion of the world was to *come from Judea* ; and though neither Tacitus nor Lucian say that Christ was born in Judea, they at least testify that he was put to death there. And “the name, expressive of contempt, by which the Lord Jesus is frequently designated in Rabbinical writings, viz. ‘The Nazarene,’ is decisive as to the place of His nativity. The Emperor Julian called the Christians of his days ‘execrable and detestable Gallilæans.’”¹ Maimonides says, “Jesus the Nazarene, the founder of the Christian religion, came into the world to pave the way for the Royal Messiah, whom we expect to appear ;” and Celsus,² the bitter enemy of Christianity, contemptuously called Christ “the ‘Nazaræan Man’”³ and the Hebrew Lexicon *Aruch*, “the accursed Nazarene.”⁴

¹ Bryant's *Authenticity of the Scriptures*, p. 134. Camb. 1793.

² Mill's *British Jews*, p. 219. ³ Lardner, vol. viii. p. 12.

⁴ Hengst. vol. ii. p. 108.

54 MESSIAH TO DIE AS A MALEFACTOR.

3. *The Messiah was to die as a Malefactor.*

ISA. liii. 12.—“He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many.”

ISA. liii. 7, 8.—“He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. . . He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

(Kimchi renders the words “from prison and from judgment” by “from oppression, and from the sentence which the judges passed upon the prisoners.”¹)

ZECH. xiii. 6.—“What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”

DAN. ix. 26.—“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.”

ABEN EZRA (who died A.D. 1175), referring to the sufferings of “the Man of Sorrows,” described in Isaiah liii., says, “Many expound it of the Messiah, because of the assertion of our fathers of blessed memory.”²

R. JOSEPH BEN CHAJIM.—“It is well known that the

¹ Robinson, p. 154.

² Cheyne and Driver's new edition of the Bible. (Eyre and Spottiswoode.)

MESSIAH TO DIE AS A MALEFACTOR. 55

Messias is to be a sick man, because of our iniquities, according to the Scripture—‘but he is wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.’”¹

R. ELIJAH DE VIDAS.—“The purport and meaning of the text (Isa. liii.) is that our iniquities, which the Messias carries, are the cause of his being smitten.”²

R. SAMUEL LANIADO BEN ABRAHAM (who applies Isa. liii. to Messiah ben David and Messiah ben Ephraim).—“This is what is meant by the text, ‘Truly he hath borne our sicknesses;’ as the sicknesses which had been designed to come upon us for our iniquities he (Messiah ben Ephraim) hath borne, and hath carried the sorrows.”³

R. MOSES ALSHECH.—“The Messias ben Joseph, according to what our fathers of blessed memory affirm of him, shall take upon himself all the expiations of Israel, and shall be then slain in the war, to make a vicarious atonement for them, as it will be reputed the same thing as if Israel had pierced him, because on account of their sin he dies.”⁴

R. MOSES HADDARSHAN.—“Jehovah said ‘Messiah, Those, my Righteous One, those who are concealed with Thee, will be sad that their sins will bring a heavy yoke upon Thee.’ The Messiah answered, ‘Lord of the universe, I cheerfully take upon myself all those plagues and sufferings;’ and immediately the Messiah, out of love, took upon Himself all those plagues and sufferings, as is written in Isa. liii. ‘He was abused and oppressed.’”

¹ *The Trinity and Incarnation*, by Rev. John Oxlee, Rector of Molesworth, vol. iii. p. 26. Lond. 1850.

² *Ibid.* p. 27.

³ *Ibid.* p. 33.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 48.

56 MESSIAH TO DIE AS A MALEFACTOR.

CHASEDIM (a book of moral tales, printed at Venice and Basle in 1581, p. 60).—"The Messiah bears the sin of Israel."

JONATHAN—"The Messiah will give His soul unto death."

GESENIUS, the rationalistic interpreter, says of the Messianic interpretation of Isa liii., "It was only the later Jews who abandoned this interpretation—no doubt in consequence of their controversies with the Christians."

As this prophecy of the death of the Messiah has been rejected by so many Jews, I trust I shall be excused for adding the following remarks by the late Dr. M'Call :—

"The early traditions of the Hebraist Jews are clear and unequivocal, and are identical with the New Testament interpretation, as is admitted even by the modern Rabbis, who, for polemical reasons, interpret differently. ABEN ESRA, in the twelfth century, says, 'Many have interpreted this chapter of Messiah, because our ancients of blessed memory have said that Messiah was born the same day that the Temple was destroyed, and that he is bound in chains.' RABBI ALSHECH, who flourished in Palestine in the middle of the sixteenth century, makes a similar confession—'Behold our Rabbis have with one mouth confirmed and received by tradition that King Messiah is here spoken of. . . He beareth the iniquities of the children of Israel, and behold His reward

is with Him.' The truth of these confessions may be seen by consulting the ancient books of authority. In Isa. xlii. 1, and lii. 13, JONATHAN, about the time of our Lord, adds *Messiah* after the word 'servant;' 'Behold my servant, the Messiah.' The book of ZOHAR, regarded with the utmost reverence by all pious Jews, and parts of which are certainly from the first century of Christianity, also says plainly that Messiah bears the sins of the people; and that 'If he had not removed them from Israel and taken them upon himself, no man could bear the chastisement of Israel on account of the punishment pronounced in the Law.' This is what is written:— '*Surely He hath borne our sicknesses.*' The TALMUD (SANHEDRIN, vol. 98, col. 2), the PSIKTA, and YALKUT SHIMONI, all have the same interpretation. 'Behold my servant shall deal very prudently—this is the King Messiah. He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high. He shall be *exalted* more than Abraham. . . He shall be *extolled* more than Moses. . . He shall be higher than the ministering angels. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.' RABBI HUNA, in the name of RABBI ACHA, says the chastisements were divided into three parts—'one to David and the fathers; one to the rebellious generation; and one to King Messiah.' Indeed, such possession had this interpretation of the Jewish mind, that it found its way into the prayers of the Synagogue, and there it remains until this day. In the Liturgy for the Day of Atonement is found the following remarkable passage, which is given from David

58 JEWS' REJECTION OF MESSIAH.

Levi's edition of the Synagogue service books, and in his translation :—' Before He created anything, He established His dwelling (the temple) and *Yinnon*. Our righteous anointed is departed from us : horror hath seized us, and we have none to justify. He hath borne the yoke of our iniquities, and of our transgression, and is wounded because of our transgression. He beareth our sins on His shoulder that he may first pardon for our iniquities. We shall be healed by His wound at the time that the Eternal shall create Him (the Messiah) as a new creature. O bring Him up from the circle of the earth, raise Him up from Seir, to assemble us the second time on Lebanon by the hand of *Yinnon*.' ”¹

Now, as regards the historic testimony for the fulfilment of this prophecy, we have already seen that Tacitus says expressly that Christ “was put to death *as a criminal* by Pontius Pilate.”

4. *The Jews themselves were to reject the Messiah.*

ISA. liii. 3.—“ He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

ISA. lxxv. 15.—“ The Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.”

MAL. i. 10.—“ I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord

¹ *Aids to Faith*, p. 127. Lond. 1870.

of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand."
 11.—“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles.”

AMOS ix. 7.—“Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel?” 9.—“I will sift the house of Israel among all nations.”

ISA. viii. 14.—“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

ISA. xxix. 10.—“For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.”
 11.—“And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed.”

EZEK. xx. 31.—“Shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you.”

TALMUD *Berachoth*.—“Since the day that the House of the Sanctuary was made desolate, there hath been a wall of iron between Israel and their Father in Heaven.”¹

BEN UZZIEL.—“And thou, O Messiah of Israel, who art hidden by reason of the sins of the congregation of Zion, to thee hereafter is the kingdom to come.”²

R. SAMUEL LANIADO BEN ABRAHAM on Isa. lii. 13.—“As the sicknesses which had been designed to come

¹ Robinson, p. 159.

² Dr. Young's *Christology of the Targums*, p. 32.

60 JEWS' REJECTION OF MESSIAH.

upon us for our iniquities, he (Messiah ben Ephraim) hath borne and hath carried the sorrows ; whilst we erred in that we thought him to be stricken and smitten of God, that is—as it stands in the gloss of Rashi, of blessed memory—hated of heaven.”¹

JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL.—“ He (the Messiah) will be condemned.”²

R. SOLOMON JARCHI on Micah v. 2.—“ From thee shall go forth to me the Messias, the son of David ; and, accordingly, the Scripture saith, ‘ The stone which the builders despised.’ And his goings forth are from antiquity ; before the sun Jinnon was his name. Therefore he shall give them up until the time that she that beareth hath brought forth ; he shall surrender them up into the hands of their enemies.”³

ABEN EZRA on Micah v. 2.—“ Therefore the Lord shall allow Israel to continue in affliction till the time of her bringing forth, until this ruler and his friends shall join themselves with the children of Israel. Nor would it be amiss to say that the Messias shall give them up, meaning that he shall leave them alone.”⁴

R. DAVID KIMCHI on Micah v. 2.—“ Therefore he shall give them up at the time of the deliverance ; the Lord shall abandon Israel to their affliction, and shall oppress them with it until the time that she that beareth shall have brought forth.”⁵

It will be noticed that Jarchi, Aben Ezra,

¹ Oxlee, vol. iii. p. 33. ² *Ibid.* p. 20. ³ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 284.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 286.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 289.

and Kimchi, seem to have supposed that the period of their separation between Israel and the Messiah was to end, and not to begin, with the date of the Incarnation. But the fact remains that they, as well as the others, read in their prophets the prediction that such a separation was to take place.

5. *The Jewish kingdom was to come to an end.*

JER. xxxiii. 26.—“Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

HOSEA iii. 4.—“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince.”

GEN. xlix. 10.—“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

ONKELOS.—“There shall not pass away one exercising rule from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children’s children for ever, until that Messiah shall come, whose is the kingdom.”¹

TARGUM OF JERUSALEM.—“There shall not cease kings from the house of Judah, nor scribes teaching the law

¹ Dr. Young’s *Christology of the Targums*, pp. 1, 2.

from his children's children, until the time that King Messiah shall come."¹

R. MOSES NACHMANIDES on Genesis xlix. 10.—“They no longer have kings and princes, and for many days Israel is destitute of a king.”²

R. ISAAC ABARBANEL on Numbers xxiv. 17.—“In the place where, at the time of their exile, they shall have neither king nor prince wielding a royal sceptre; in those days behold there shall arise of itself a right sceptre and a kingdom out of Israel; the sceptre which shall thus arise out of Israel being the King Messias.”³

R. BECHAI on Gen. xlix. 10.—“Until Shiloh come; that is, his son, proceeding from his seed. But as to the use of the term Shiloh instead of his son, Jacob calls the Messias by the name of Shiloh, meaning his son.”⁴

R. MOSES ALSHECH,⁵ R. ABRAHAM SEDA,⁶ and R. JOSEPH GALLUS,⁷ all translate Genesis xlix. 10—“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,” etc., “until Shiloh come;” that is, “the King Messiah.”

It will be observed that in the Targums and writings of the Rabbis, Shiloh and Messiah are regarded as one and the same person, and that the advent of this person was to be the

¹ Dr. Young's *Christology of the Targums*, pp. 1, 2.

² Oxlee, vol. ii. p. 191.

³ *Ibid.* p. 232.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 193.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 194.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 204.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 205.

prelude to the departure of the sceptre from Judah. "All antiquity," says Hengstenberg, "agrees in interpreting this passage (Gen. xlix.) of a personal Messiah."¹

R. KIMCHI, on Hos. iii. 4.—"These are the days of the exile in which we are now. We have neither a king nor a prince out of Israel, but are under the dominion of the Gentiles and their kings."²

R. RACHMON.—"Woe to us, for the sceptre is departed from Judah, and the son of David is not yet come."³

TACITUS also proves the fulfilment of this prophecy. He says, "This commotion the death of Caligula (A.D. 37) extinguished. Claudius (Emperor of Rome, A.D. 41)—*the Jewish kings being either dead or their dominion reduced to narrow limits*—committed the province of Judea to Roman knights or his freedmen;"⁴ and GIBBON tells us that by A.D. 135 Judea had become merely a Roman colony. Here,

¹ Hengstenberg, vol. i. p. 65.

² *Ibid.* p. 279.

³ Gill's *Prophecies of the Messiah*, p. 41. Lond. 1728.

⁴ Tacitus, *Hist.* B. v. c. ix., Oxford edition, revised. Lond. 1872.

though outside of our argument, we cannot but recall the memorable exclamation of the Jews before Pilate, "We have no king but Cæsar!"

6. Jerusalem and its Temple to be destroyed.

DAN. ix. 26.—"After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

DEUT. xxviii. 49, 52.—"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth [the Roman eagle?]; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand. . . And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst."

AMOS vii. 9.—"The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuary of Israel shall be laid waste," ("destroyed."—Hengstenberg).

MICAH iii. 12.—"Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field."

ISA. lxiv. 10, 11.—"Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste."

JER. ix. 11.—"I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons."

MEDRASH, on Deut. xxxii. 12.—“The second temple shall continue to the age to come and days of the Messias.”¹

R. ELIEZER, in the “Mishna”—“On the eve of Messiah’s advent . . Galilee shall be laid waste, and Judea shall be made desolate”²

ECHA RABBATI.—“Before the time of the Sanctuary being burnt down, the Messias was born.”³

MANASSEH BEN ISRAEL thinks that at the 49th verse of Deut xxviii. commences the prophecy of the calamities under the second temple. He refers all the latter part of the chapter to the invasion of the Romans and the misfortunes that followed it. — (Parker’s *Commentary*, vol. v. p. 576.)⁴

R. LIPMAN, on Dan. ix. 24.—“The exposition of the text is, that at the time when the 70 years commenced, and the 70 years’ exile was decreed; it was likewise decreed that after their 70 intermissions, or 490 years, they should be banished and the second temple should be laid waste; for those 70 years and the 420 years of the second temple amount to 490. The exile itself is to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, that is the advent of our Messias.”⁵

Mr. Oxlee remarks “that, according to the most accurate tables of prophane chronology

¹ Chandler, pp. 82, 83.

² Robinson’s *Evangelists and Mishna*, p. 253.

³ Oxlee, vol. iii. p. 184.

⁴ *History the Interpreter of Prophecy*, H. Kett, B.D., vol. i. p. 142.

⁵ Oxlee, vol. iii. p. 169.

now extant, between the 6th year of Darius Nothus in which the second temple was fairly completed, and A.D. 72, in which the same temple was totally demolished by Titus, there was exactly an interval of 490 years.”¹

There is, however, unquestionably a difficulty in fixing the period from which those weeks of years began to run, as appears, for example, in our next Jewish quotation.

RASHI, on Dan. ix. 24.—“After the 2000 years of the law it was our destiny that the Messiah should have come. . . But by reason of our sins the Messiah did not come.”² This view, according to Mr. Oxlee, would give 172 years after the destruction of the temple, and he endeavours to explain the cause of the difference at page 176 of his third volume. But whatever difficulties may present themselves in endeavouring to fix a precisely definite period for the expiry of these years, and therefore an exact time in which the prophecy should have been fulfilled, there can be no doubt that the Jews expected the Messiah

¹ Oxlee, vol. iii. p. 171.

² *Ibid.* p. 175.

at or before the time when the temple was destroyed, as further appears from some of the following passages from Jewish writers :—

R. JOSE.—“Very remarkable,” says Bishop Chandler, “is the saying of R. Jose, who lived at the destruction by Titus, and grieving at the sight thereof, said, ‘Alas! the time of the Messiah is past.’”¹

ABEN EZRA, A.D. 1175, on Isaiah liii.—“On the day on which the sanctuary was destroyed the Messiah was born and is now detained in prison.”²

JERUSALEM TALMUD.—“The redeemer of the Jews is born. . . Where do they” (the redeemer’s family) “dwell?” “In BIRATH ARBA of Bethlehem Juda.” . . “On his” (the redeemer’s) “account” (or with him) “the temple was laid waste.” “We trust in the Lord,” he replied, “that as with him it was destroyed so with him it shall be rebuilt.”³

¹ Chandler, pp. 82, 83.

² Cheyne and Driver’s new edition of the Bible. (Eyre and Spottiswoode.)

³ Robinson’s *Evangelists and Mishna*, p. 199.

ECHA RABBATI.—“The deliverer of the Jews is born. He asked him, What is his name? He answered, Menachim or Comforter is his name. . . The instant that he was born the Temple of the Sanctuary was destroyed. He said to her, We have trust in the Lord of the world, that as on the instant of his birth it was destroyed so at the same instant it is rebuilt.”¹

R. ABUN.—“On the same day on which the Temple was destroyed the Messiah was born.”¹

R. ELIEZER.—“What is become of our city which was believed to be inhabited by God? It is rooted up from the very foundations, and the only monument of it that is left is the camp of those who destroyed it, still pitched upon its remains.”²

MAIMONIDES, as also the TALMUD, records that Terentius Rufus, an officer in the army of Titus, with a ploughshare tore up the foundations of the temple.²

¹ Oxlee, vol. iii. pp. 179, 180.

² *History the Interpreter of Prophecy*, Kett, vol. i. pp. 297, 298. Lond. 1799.

JOSEPHUS says that, with the exception of a portion of the walls, and three of the oldest towers, "there was nothing left to make those that come thither believe it had ever been inhabited."¹

He has also the following references to the ancient prophecies :—" They occasioned the fulfilment of those very prophecies belonging to their own country, for there was a certain ancient oracle of those men that the city should then be taken, and the Sanctuary burned, by right of war, when a sedition should invade the Jews, and their own hands should pollute the temple of God."²

Again, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, " In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing as God had showed them to him, insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honour wherewith God honoured Daniel."³

¹ Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* lib. i. ² *Ibid.* lib. iv. 6, 3. ³ *Ant.* x. 11.

It is right to mention here that PORPHYRY the sceptic (A.D. 270), would have had Daniel's prediction to refer to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, according to Josephus, prevented the Jews from offering the daily sacrifice, and polluted the temple with statues of Jupiter and himself. This has given rise (as it seems to me) to much unnecessary controversy, for the stoppage of the sacrifice by Antiochus, who died 164 years before Christ,¹ was only temporary ; whereas it terminated finally under Titus, when Christianity with its new rites came in its place. Moreover, the temple, which it was predicted should be destroyed at the same time as the cessation of the sacrifice, was not destroyed by Antiochus but by Titus, who drove the Jews out of their land, which was sold by Vespasian for his own use. Besides this, the general expectation of the Jews, as evidenced by their rebellion and the appearance among them of false Messiahs, did not take place in the time of Antiochus but in the time of Titus.² But we have the conclusive

¹ Newton *on the Prophecies*, vol. ii. Dissert. 20.

² *Ibid.*

evidence of JOSEPHUS as to the Jewish belief in his time, for he tells us expressly that "Daniel wrote concerning *this time*, and concerning the Roman empire," and that "Daniel's book is received among the holy Scriptures." While SÜETONIUS says that the empire of the world was fated to take place "*at that time*;" and TACITUS, that the dominion of the world was to come from Judea "*at that very time*." It is for the disbelievers in prophecy to tell us plainly how they account for this widespread conviction.

JACCHIADES, another Jewish writer, says, on Daniel ix. 24, that "the 70 weeks of years were finished in the destruction of Jerusalem."¹

HERMANN ADLER.—"By these 70 years in Jeremiah's prophecy, ordinary years were not to be understood . . but weeks of years, *i.e.*, periods of seven years each."

7. *The Jewish daily sacrifice was to cease.*

² CHRON. xv. 3.—"Many days will there be to Israel when there is no true God, and no teaching priest, and no law." (Hengst. *translation*.)

¹ Le Clerc's Grotius *De Verit. Chr. Rel.*, lib. v. sect. 14. Chandler, vol. i. p. 114.

DAN. ix. 27.—“In the midst of the week, he (the Messiah) shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.”

DAN. xii. 11.—“From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”

JOEL i. 9.—“The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests, the Lord’s ministers, mourn.” 13.—“The meat offering and the drink offering are withholden from the house of your God.”

DAN. xi. 31.—“They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice.”

HOS. iii. 4.—“The children of Israel shall abide many days . . . without a sacrifice.”

R. MOSES NACHMANIDES, on Dan. vii. 13.—“There shall come the REDEEMER, of whom it is written, His throne is as the sun before me; that is the son of David, who is made in the image of God, according to the text, ‘Behold there came with the clouds of Heaven one like a son of man,’ etc. Now this shall take place 118 years after the five thousand, so as to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Daniel, ‘and from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away,’”¹ etc.

VAYIKRA RABBA.—“In the time to come all the oblations shall cease, but the oblation of thanksgiving shall not cease. All the prayers shall cease, but praise shall not cease.”²

¹ Oxlee, vol. iii. p. 89.

² *Ibid.* p. 325.

JOSEPHUS,¹ in his account of the last siege of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, says, "Titus gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia, and make him a ready passage for his army to come up, while he himself had Josephus brought to him, for he had been informed that on that very day, which was the 17th day of Panemus (Tammuz), *the sacrifice, called the daily sacrifice, had failed, and had not been offered to God* for want of men to offer it, and that the people were grievously troubled at it."

It is also stated in the Mishna, A.D. 180, "On the 17th day of Tammuz the tables of the law were broken; *the perpetual sacrifice ceased.*"²

Again, in the Jewish prayer-book (of 1859), already quoted, we find the following at p. 9:—"Now, because of our iniquities, we have neither sanctuary, nor altar, nor offering, nor priest to atone for us; there is nothing left but the commemoration of them."

¹ *Bell. Jud.* vi. 2.

² Lardner, vol. vii. p. 141.

74 THE JEWS DISPERSED, YET PRESERVED.

8. *The Jews to be dispersed, yet preserved.*

HOS. ix. 17.—“They shall be wanderers among the nations.”

LEV. xxvi. 33.—“I will scatter you among the heathen.”

DEUT. xxviii. 25.—“Shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.”

AMOS ix. 8.—“The eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth ; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob. . . . I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve.”

ZECH. ii. 6.—“I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven.”

AMOS viii. 12.—“They shall wander from sea to sea and from the north even to the east.”

EZEK. vi. 8.—“Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.” xii. 15, 16.—“I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries. But I will leave a few men of them.” xiv. 22.—“Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth.”

LEVITICUS xxvi. 44.—“Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly.”

NUMB. xxiii. 9.—“So the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.”

THE JEWS DISPERSED, YET PRESERVED. 75

JER. xlv. 28.—“I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure.”

PSEUDO-JONATHAN, A.D. 500.—“If there be any of your dispersed ones in the ends of the heavens, from thence will the word of the Lord your God gather you by the hand of Elijah the high priest, and from thence will he bring you by the hands of King Messiah.”¹

BEN UZZIEL.—“They shall be gathered from the midst of their captivity. They shall dwell under the shadow of their Messiah.”¹

TARGUM OF JERUSALEM (on Numbers xxiii.)—“Behold this people shall dwell alone, and not be mixed with the laws of the Gentiles.”²

TARGUM OF PALESTINE³ (on Numbers xxix.)—“The Lord will disperse you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other.”

We all know that there is no part of the civilised world where the Jews are not found—though everywhere a separate and distinct people. It is well here to note that “if God had chosen any of the great and powerful nations of the earth for his peculiar people . . . the scorners would have blasphemed, and said that God was still on the strongest side.”⁴

¹ Dr. Young's *Christology of the Targums*, pp. 11, 31.

² Etheridge, p. 423.

³ *Ibid.* p. 648, *et seq.*

⁴ Leslie's *Short and Easy Method*, p. 105.

76 PERSECUTED AS WELL AS DISPERSED.

9. *Jews to be persecuted as well as dispersed.*

JER. xxiv. 9.—“I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.” xlix. 15.—“I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men.”

DEUT. xxviii. 37.—“Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.”

IS. lxxv. 15.—“And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen : for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.”

ONKELOS (on Deut. xxviii.)—“The produce of thy land and all thy labours, a people whom thou knowest not shall devour, and thou wilt only be oppressed and crushed all thy days. . . Thou wilt become a ruin, a proverb, and a history, among all nations whither the Lord shall make thee go.” On Lev. xxvi.—“Unto those of you who remain will I bring brokenness of their hearts in the land of their enemies.”¹

The world's history painfully fulfils this prophecy. The imperial Roman decrees against the Jews are as explicit as they are exceptional. The code of Theodosius, A.D. 425, contains the following enactment:—“We or-

¹ Etheridge's *Translation*, pp. 234, 537.

SURROUNDING NATIONS DESTROYED. 77

dain for ever that no Jew or Samaritan, constant in neither law, shall find his way to honours or dignities, and that the administration of civil service shall be open to none, nor even to discharge the duty of an advocate.”¹ “Towards them alone,” says Dr. Keith, who calls them “Citizens of the world without a country,” “one of the noblest charters of liberty on earth, *Magna Charta*, the Briton’s boast, legalised an act of injustice.”²

10. *Though the Jews themselves were to be preserved, the surrounding nations were to be destroyed.*

MICAH i. 6.—“I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.”

ZEPH. ii. 4.—“Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up.” 5.—“Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.” 6.—“And the sea coast shall

¹ Giles’ *Heathen Records*, p. 152.

² Keith’s *Evidences*, pp. 81, 75.

78 SURROUNDING NATIONS DESTROYED.

be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks." 9.—"As I live, saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah." 12.—"Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword." 13.—"And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness." 14.—"And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it."

JER. xlix. 17, and EZEK. xxxv. 3.—"Edom (or Idumea) shall be a desolation."

EZEK. xxvi. 5.—"Tyre shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." xxx. 12.—"I will make the land (Egypt) waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers."

DAN. ii. 44.—"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." vii. 9.—"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit."

ONKELOS.—"When a king shall arise from Jacob, and Messiah be exalted from Israel, then he shall kill the great ones of Moab, and he shall rule over all the children of men."¹

¹ Dr. Young's *Christology of the Targums*, p. 1.

SURROUNDING NATIONS DESTROYED. 79

JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL.—“The people shall be broken before Messiah.”¹

“Rejoice not all of you, O ye Philistines, because the dominion of him who ruled over you is broken ; for from the children’s children of Jesse shall proceed Messiah, and his works shall be among you as flying serpents.”¹

R. SOLOMON JARCHI.—“In the days of the Messias Israel shall make an end of all nations.”²

PSEUDO-JONATHAN.—“King Messiah, the youngest of his children, shall come, and on account of him shall the nations be dissolved.”¹

TARGUM OF PALESTINE (on Numb. xxv.) —“Great armies will come forth from Lombarnia and from the land of Italia, conjoined with the legions that will come forth from Constantina, and will afflict the Athuraee, and bring into captivity all the sons of Eber ” (the Hebrews), “nevertheless the end of these and of those is to fall by the hands of the King Meshiha, and be brought to everlasting destruction.”³

TOBIT (2d century before Christ).—“This son of man, whom thou hast seen, shall hurl the kings from their thrones and their kingdoms.”⁴

SANHEDRIM xi. 1.—“The Jews had a saying, There is no difference between this age and the days of the Messiah, except only the subjugation of the kingdoms.”⁵

¹ Dr. Young’s *Christology of the Targums*, pp. 23, 25, 7.

² Oxlee, vol. ii. p. 221.

³ Etheridge, p. 432.

⁴ Westcott’s *Study of the Gospels*, p. 102.

⁵ Robinson, p. 248.

80 SURROUNDING NATIONS DESTROYED.

R. LEVI BEN GERSON. — "The stone, by the blow whereof that image which represented the Empires should be broken to pieces, was the Messiah."

R. SOLOMON, R. ABENESDRAS, and R. SAADIA, say that that kingdom, which would consume the rest of the kingdoms, was the kingdom of the Messiah.¹

R. MOSES ALSHECH. — "The Lord in due time shall send forth from Zion the rod of thy strength, which shall smite the nations with force, namely, THE KING MESSIAS."²

TARGUM OF JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL. — "He (the Messiah) shall cause to cease the glory of all kingdoms."³

Mr. Tylor, whose sympathies are certainly not with the upholders of supernaturalism, says — "The great Syrophœnician kingdoms and religions have long since passed away into darkness, leaving nothing but antiquarian relics to vouch for their former might. Far other has been the history of their Jewish kindred, — still standing fast to their ancient nationality, still upholding to this day their patriarchal religion in the midst of nations who inherit from them the faith of Israel — the belief in one God."⁴

¹ Le Clerc's *Grotius*, translated by Dr. Clarke, book v. sect. 14.

² Oxlee, vol. iii. p. 77.

³ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 20.

⁴ *Primitive Culture*, p. 332, vol. ii. Lond. 1871.

VOLNEY, as quoted by Dr. Keith, who characterised him as "a most zealous partisan and successful promoter of infidelity,"¹ thus expresses himself:—"I journeyed in the empire of the Ottomans, and traversed the provinces which formerly were kingdoms of Egypt and Syria. I wandered over the country. I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria. This Syria, said I to myself, now almost depopulated, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages, and hamlets. What are become of so many productions of the hand of man? What are become of those ages of abundance and of life?"² "Great God! from whom proceed such melancholy revolutions? For what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed! Why are so many cities destroyed? Why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated?"³

II. *The New Covenant.*

JER. xxxi. 31, 32.—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the days that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt."

JOEL ii. 28, 29.—"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men

¹ Keith's *Evidences*, p. 16.

² Volney, c. i. p. 127.

³ Volney, c. ii.

shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions : and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

JER. iii. 16.—"It shall come to pass . . . in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord : neither shall it come to mind : neither shall they remember it ; neither shall they visit it ; neither shall that be done any more."

The Book JELAMMEDENU, quoted by *Abarbanel*.—"Under the present dispensation Israel learns the law from mortal man, and therefore forgets it. . . . But a time shall come when a man shall not learn from the mouth of a man, but from the mouth of the blessed God, for it is written, 'All thy children shall be taught by God.' In these words it is implied that hitherto the knowledge of the law was an artificial one, obtained by mortal men. But for that reason it cannot stand long, for the effect stands in proportion to its cause. At the time of the deliverance, however, the knowledge of the law will be obtained in a miraculous manner."¹

In ZOHAR CHADUSH, it is said—"In the days of the Messiah knowledge shall be renewed in the world, and the law shall be made plain among all, as it is written, Jer. xxxi. 33, 'They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest.'"² . . . And in ZOHAR LEVIT.—"There shall be no time like this till the Messiah comes ; and then the knowledge of God shall be found

¹ Hengstenberg, vol. ii. p. 443.

² Townley's *Laws of Moses*, p. 332. London, 1827.

in every part of the world.¹ . . . It was their custom on the last day of the feast to bring water from the fountain of Silbah, which the priests poured on the altar, singing the words of Isaiah (xii. 3), '*With joy shall ye draw water from the fountain of salvation;*' which words the Targum interprets, *With joy shall ye receive a new doctrine from the elect of the just.*"²

ZOHAR. — "About the times of the Messiah all the forms of wisdom, even the most profound, shall be manifested, even to children."³

D. KIMCHI, on Joel ii. 28. — "On the sons of the alien, who should be their husbandmen and vine-dressers, the spirit of knowledge and of understanding should be poured out in the days of the Messiah."⁴

R. SOLOMON EPHRAIM. — "So soon as the morning of the Messiah has arisen . . . and when once the heart of stone shall be removed from the midst of us, they will then no longer bring sacrifices or oblations for sin, but only in the way of a gift or a present, as so many vows or voluntary offerings."⁵

R. BECHAI, on Gen. xlix. 10. — "In the age of the Messias the influx of prophecy, of wisdom, and of knowledge, shall be as the waters which cover the sea."⁶

MEDRASH KOHELETH. — "The law which a man

¹ Townley's *Laws of Moses*, pp. 96, 97.

² Grave's *Lectures on the Pentateuch*, vol. ii. pp. 482-485; quoted *ibid.* p. 99.

³ Robinson's *Evangelists and Mishna*, p. 57. ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 70.

⁵ Oxlee's *Letters*, p. 81.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 193.

learneth in this present world is mere vanity compared with the law of the Messiah.”¹

R. AKIBA. — “The Holy One, blessed be he, shall expound to them the meanings or senses of a new law, which the Holy One is going to give them by the hands of the Messiah.”²

ZOHAR CHADUSH. — “As soon as ever this spirit of the Messiah shall brood upon the surface of the waters of the law there will be redemption according to the Scripture, ‘God said let there be light.’”³

MEDRASH TILLIM. — “The distinctions between clean and unclean are to be abolished.”

The eternal and all comprehensive principles of Christianity have long ago superseded the complicated code of morals of the Jews. Where are now the laws which consisted, as the Jewish lawyers stated, of 613 different precepts?⁴

12. *The Messiah was to conquer and regenerate the whole world.*

MAL. i. 11. — “From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles.”

¹ Oxlee, vol. iii. p. 107.

² *Ibid.* p. 326.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 98, 118.

⁴ Townley's *Laws of Moses*, p. 332. London, 1827.

JER. xvi. 19.—“The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth.”

GEN. xxii. 18.—“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

PS. xxii. 27.—“All the families of the Gentiles shall worship before thee.”

ISA. xlix. 6.—“It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” 20-22.—“The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me : give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles.”

BEN UZZIEL.—“He shall reveal his Messiah, whose name is spoken of from of old, and he shall rule over all kingdoms.¹

“For on account of the miracle and redemption which thou hast wrought for King Messiah and for the rest of thy people who remain, all the peoples, nations, and tongues, shall praise, and say, There is no God but the Lord.¹

“Behold, my servant, Messiah, I will bring him near.

¹ Dr. Young's *Christology of the Targums*, pp. 34, 14.

. . I will put the Holy Spirit upon him; he will reveal to the nations my judgments.¹

"Thou wilt prolong the days of King Messiah, (and) his years as the generations of this world and the generations of the world to come."¹

JERUSALEM TARGUM.—"King Messiah shall come, whose is the kingdom, and to him are all the kingdoms of the earth to be subjected."¹

R. S. EPHRAIM.—"So likewise with respect to the future is it written of the King Messias, 'To the increase of the Government and to peace there shall be no end.'"²

R. JEHUDA.—"The whole universe shall do so" (worship Him), "when that the King Messias shall come."²

The following Heathen writers thus refer to the inauguration of the Christian faith:—

TACITUS.³ — "The pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but throughout the city of Rome also."

SUETONIUS⁴ says of Nero, "He likewise inflicted punishment on the Christians, a sort of people who held a new and impious superstition."

¹ Dr. Young's *Christology of the Targums*, pp. 26, 17, 2.

² Oxlee, vol. iii. pp. 368, 367.

³ *Annals*, xv. 45.

⁴ Suetonius, cap. xvi.

There are now, as the result of the three years' teaching of this despised Nazarene, no fewer than 340 millions of His followers in the world;¹ and, according to Max Müller, "the first place in the scale [of numbers] belongs to Christianity," so that *the Christian is the largest religious body at present in the world*. And, unlike almost all other religions, which are only national, it binds together the European, the American, the Indian, the South Sea Islander, and the Esquimaux, in spite of their different languages, habits, and national prejudices. In short, judged by its consequences, *the crucifixion is unquestionably by far the most momentous fact in the world's whole history*. "Christ," says a recent writer, "declared that the world should bow down to Him; the nations worship Him; that He should judge quick and dead. Are they pretensions of a straw-crowned bedlam monarch? Are they declarations of impious ambition or mid-summer madness? . . . For nineteen hundred years He has been the centre and cause of all

¹ See the *Statistics* of Berghaus and Keith Johnston.

moral and spiritual development amongst the wisest nations ; and outside of these nations exists little real knowledge. Around His life, work, and death, the whole world gathers.”¹ “Whether it was by natural or by supernatural means, it cannot be denied that He, to whom the natural and the supernatural are alike subject, has permitted the course of events in the world to bear a witness to Christ, such as has never been borne to any other person who has appeared upon earth in the likeness of man.”² “The witness of history to Christ,” says Dr. Farrar, “has been given with irresistible cogency, and it has been given to none but Him.”

¹ *The Supernatural in Nature*, pp. 476, 475.

² *Aids to Faith*, p. 10. Dean Mansel.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIONS FROM OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES.

T clearly appears from the last chapter that—explain the facts as we may, Old Testament prophecy was not a “*vaticinium post eventum*,” but was uttered long before the time of Christ, and has since been fulfilled. “Critical objections,” says *Kuenen*, “are of no avail here, although the prophecies were denied to be the works of those men whose names they bear, or were assigned to a much later period than that in which the historical narrative places them, yet, chronologically, they precede the establishment of Christianity and the birth of Jesus.” We have seen these predictions corroborated by the earlier Jewish writings, which, in all the quotations we have given, are even more distinctly Messianic in their language than our own

Version of those portions of Scripture. This fulfilment of prophecy we have endeavoured to prove in *twelve* different cases, and that, too, exclusively by hostile testimony, and the evidence of our own experience at the present moment. And to these twelve prophecies must be added that of the Advent itself.

But an objection may, perhaps, be raised against our argument, on the ground that the passages we have quoted from the Old Testament are not now regarded by some of the modern Jews as Messianic predictions at all. We are, however, surely bound to respect the renderings of the Old Testament by the early Jews, rather than those of the present time, who, having at last lost all hope of the advent of the Messiah, now attempt to put other meanings on the Old Testament than those of their forefathers. The *consensus* of the earlier Jewish writers and expositors is, we have seen, wholly in favour of the Messianic character of these predictions. Now the peculiar and great value of the testimony of Jewish writers, whether ancient or more modern, for it matters not, arises from this, that

they had no interest in twisting or perverting the meaning of the Old Testament. They were—the *earlier* of them, at least—unlike those modern Jews, on the one hand, whose interest it is to find no traces of a Messianic prophecy anywhere; and unlike the Christians, on the other hand, who naturally, in Christ's cause, try to find the Messiah everywhere. As to the christology of the *later* Targumists, we may say with Lord President Forbes, "no one can suppose that complaisance to the Christians produced the expressions relied on."¹

But suppose we grant that the modern Jews, though obviously to some extent biassed, and not so well acquainted with the Hebrew idioms as their forefathers, nor yet so able to understand the feelings, traditions, and modes of thought of the ancient writers, may nevertheless be right after all in their interpretation of Scripture, and the ancient Rabbis wrong; in what position does such a concession leave our argument? Just this, that our opponents have to face miracles still more perplexing in their

¹ Forbes' *Works*, vol. i. p. 183.

character than those which they dispute, viz., that the early Jews and Targumists rightly expounded the Advent of Christianity out of books that do not contain a syllable on the subject! Is the case for the sceptic bettered by such a monstrous hypothesis? or are not the difficulties greatly enhanced by this new complication? But whichever view be taken, matters nothing in our argument for supernaturalism. We have proved that these prophecies were published long before the events which fulfilled them; and whether they were uttered by Isaiah, or imagined by Onkelos to have been uttered by him, is nothing to our present purpose. For either the Old Testament was inspired or the Targums—one or other; and it is obviously of no consequence as regards supernaturalism which of the two it was. In short, though all the critics in the world were now to put other than the ancient meanings on these passages, it would be of no avail in the cause of scepticism. Even one historical fact seems fatal to all such modern criticism, namely, that the Jews at the

time of Christ believed the time had come when the Messiah was to appear and lead them on to conquer the world, and were so elated by those ancient predictions, *as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Josephus testify*, that they shortly afterwards rose in that fatal war against the Romans, which ended in the extinction of their kingdom and priesthood, and drove them out of their country to become wanderers over the face of the earth.

But let us next consider whether Hume's objection to the miracles of Christ can in any way apply to, or have any possible bearing on, the facts which we think we have established. It will be at once acknowledged that such a class of facts rests on a very different basis from those of the miracles of Christ. Granting, for argument's sake, as we have already done, the full force of Hume's objection, when brought against those alleged miracles, the authority for which rests on the testimony of interested persons; surely every man of candour will at once allow that the same kind of objection cannot apply to the *thirteen*

prophecies which hostile writers prove were not only widely spread before Christianity was established, but also that they have since been literally fulfilled. Now, I assert that if a long series of prophecies of *most improbable events*, extending over a thousand years, can be proved to have been fulfilled in after times, such a fact establishes as clearly the operation of what we call supernatural power, as any number of what we call miracles. And be it remembered that the strength of the argument does not increase simply as the number of the fulfilled prophecies, but in a far higher ratio. Now in case any one should dispute the identity of prophecy and miracle, we call Hume himself as a witness. "What we have said of miracles," says Hume, "may be applied without any variation to prophecies ; and, indeed, all prophecies are miracles, and as such only, can be admitted as proofs of any revelation." (Hume's *Essays*, vol. ii. p. 129.) On Hume's own testimony, then, we conclude that it is only by supernatural agency we can explain the fulfilment of so many various predictions, many

of which were most unlikely to have been ever fulfilled. "The most improbable prophecy in the world," said the late Dr. M'Call, "was that which predicted that a Jew, despised by His people, numbered amongst transgressors, cut off out of the land of the living, should, nevertheless, prolong His days, be the light of the Gentiles, and God's salvation to the ends of the world; and yet this is what has been accomplished, and is still accomplishing itself before our eyes."¹ If it be not a supernatural power that is now guiding the destinies of the world, and is every day, as we see, urging 340 millions of Christians, and six millions of Jews, along the very strange and narrow lines exactly prescribed for each of them some thousand years ago by prophecy, how else are we to explain the startling phenomena? And if there be really a supernatural power daily at work in the world, why may not the same power have in past times produced the miracles narrated in the gospels? This, moreover, is all the more likely, since the miracles

¹ *Aids to Faith*, pp. 88-111. Lond. 1870.

are said to have emanated from the very same Divine source as the prophecies. Both claim to be inseparable links in the same supernatural chain, and both are found in the same sacred records.

But after all that has been said, it may naturally enough be asked, Whether the advent of Christ has really achieved the great results which were predicted of it in Scripture? Now it must be at once and most fully admitted that the Christian Church has as yet very poorly realised its true mission. How far this failure is also the fulfilment, as many allege, of certain predictions which are found in the New Testament, is neither within my province nor within my power to decide. But it is certainly true that, what with the Holy Wars, the Romish Inquisitions, the struggles after supremacy among different denominations, and the never-ending angry strifes and jealousies about petty theological dogmas and trumpery ecclesiastical tenets of rival sects (who thus seem too often to prefer the growth of their own churches to that of our common

Christianity), the true spirit of the Great Founder has been, and still is, shamefully disregarded, and the unity of the Church most needlessly, and therefore most sinfully, broken up. These discreditable violations of the very plainest Scriptural *commands* to follow after peace and unity, as the indispensable test of discipleship, seem to show that some of those who profess the faith of their Church most loudly, are, after all, farther back in the A B C of Christianity than many whom they despise as being babes in Christ; thus verifying the saying of the Master, "There are first, who shall be last." Yet, in spite of all this, I think it still remains true that with Christianity have come civilisation, the abolition of slavery, the proper treatment of women and children, the education of the people, the establishment of hospitals for the sick, and asylums for the insane; as well as innumerable institutions, societies, and missions for the reclamation of the vicious, the instruction of the ignorant, and the raising up of the fallen—in a world, of all

that is now considered best in this suffering world of ours.

But instead of endeavouring to prove the truth of these assertions by means of Christian evidence, I shall pursue the same kind of proof as in the preceding chapters, and leave it wholly to those who have rejected Christianity as a divine revelation, to speak what they feel as to the character of Christ, and the ameliorating influence which His Gospel has exerted on society and the world at large. The following quotations are from authors all of whom are understood to have professed to be of that class. And I most willingly admit that these passages claim our admiration and respect, as in the highest degree honourable to the candour and impartiality of the writers :—

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU, in his *Emile*.—"I will confess to you further that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scripture ! Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man ? Is it possible that

the sacred personage whose history it contains should be Himself a mere man? . . . Where could Jesus learn among his compatriots that pure and sublime morality of which he only hath given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known amidst the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people on the earth. . . . If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a god. Shall we suppose the Evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friends, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ."¹

STRAUSS.—“Where shall we find in such beauty as we find it in Jesus that mirroring purity of soul, which the fury of the storm may agitate but cannot cloud? Where has there been so grand an idea, so restless an activity, so exalted a sacrifice for it, as in Jesus? *Who has been the founder of a work which has endowed with as rich treasures, in as high a degree, the masses of men and nations through the long ages, as the work which bears the name of Christ?* As little as mankind can be without religion, so little can they be without Christ. And this Christ, as inseparable from the supremest shaping of religion, is historical, not mythical. He is an individual, not a bare symbol.”

PROFESSOR HUXLEY, in his speech to the London School Board in 1871, is reported (*Daily News*, 23d Feb.) to have said regarding his own experience of the

¹ Keith's *Demonstration*, p. 431. Edinb. 1838.

lapsed classes—"We had a mass of half-instructed or wholly uninstructed population to deal with, *which owed what little redemption it enjoyed from barbarism and ignorance, to the clergy of the different denominations.* No one who had seen the condition of the poor as he saw them when a medical officer, had failed to note that in the lowest of haunts, where misery and wretchedness existed, and to which he had not found a parallel amongst the savages whom he had since visited, *the people owed all they had been taught to the ministers of religion.*"

"SUPERNATURAL RELIGION."—The anonymous author of this book says, "*The teaching of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained or attainable by humanity. The influence of His religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity and elevation of His own character.* Surpassing in his sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Chakya-Mouni, and putting to the blush the sometimes sullied though generally admirable teaching of Socrates and Plato, and the whole round of Greek philosophers, He presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble, and consistent with his more lofty principles, so that the 'imitation of Christ' has become almost the final word in the preaching of His religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence."¹

THEODORE PARKER, the American apostle of Naturalism, says—"He" (Christ) "unites in Himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, *thus more than*

¹ Vol. ii. 2d ed. p. 487.

realising the dream of prophets and sages; rises free from all prejudices of His age, nation, or sect; gives free range to the Spirit of God in His breast; sets aside the law, sacred and time-honoured as it was, its forms, its sacrifices, its temple, its priests; puts away the doctors of the law, subtle, irrefragable, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as Heaven, and true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the Rabbis—He rises above them all. . . Try Him as we try other teachers. They deliver their word; find a few waiting for the consolation, who accept the new tidings, follow the new method, and soon go beyond their teacher, though less mighty minds than he. Such is the case with each founder of a school of philosophy, each sect in religion. Though humble men, we see what Socrates and Luther never saw. But eighteen centuries have passed since the tide of humanity rose so high in Jesus—what man, what sect, what church, has mastered His thought, comprehended his method, and so fully applied it to life?"

RENAN.—"*Galilee has created the most sublime ideal for the popular imagination, for behind its idyl moves the fate of humanity, and the light which illumines the picture is the sun of the kingdom of God.*¹ . . . Whatever may be the unexpected phenomena of the future, Jesus will not be surpassed. His worship will constantly renew its youth, the tale of his life will cause ceaseless tears, his sufferings will soften the best hearts, all the ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born who is greater than Jesus."

¹ Renan, ch. 14 and 28.

"He has created the heaven of pure souls, where is found what we ask for in vain on earth. . .

"The great Master of those who take refuge in this ideal kingdom of God, is still Jesus. He was the first to proclaim the royalty of the mind, the first to say, at least by His actions, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' The foundation of true religion is indeed His work; after Him all that remains is to develop it and render it fruitful. . .

"The Jesus who founded the true kingdom of God, the kingdom of the meek and humble, was the Jesus of early life, of those chaste and pure days when the voice of His Father re-echoed within him in clearer tones. It was then for some months, perhaps a year, that God truly dwelt on the earth. . .

"Rest now in Thy glory, noble initiator. Fear no more to see the edifice of Thy efforts crumble through a flaw. For thousands of years the world will extol thee. . . Thou wilt become to such a degree the corner-stone of our humanity that to tear Thy name from this world would be to shake it to its foundations. Between Thee and God, men will no longer distinguish. Complete conqueror of death, take possession of Thy kingdom; whither, by the royal road Thou hast traced, ages of adorers will follow Thee."

Mr. RATHBONE GREG, author of the well-known attack on the Gospels called "*The Creed of Christendom*," says, "*It is difficult, without exhausting superlatives, even to unexpressive and wearisome satiety, to do justice to our intense love, reverence, and admiration for the character and teaching of Jesus. We regard Him not as the perfection of the intellectual or philosophical mind, but as*

the perfection of the spiritual character—as surpassing all men of all times in the closeness and depth of His communion with the Father. In reading His sayings we *feel that we are holding converse with the wisest, purest, noblest Being that ever clothed thought in the poor language of humanity. In studying His life we feel that we are following the footsteps of the highest ideal yet presented to us upon earth.* . . I value the religion of Jesus not as being absolute and perfect truth, but as containing more truth, purer truth, higher truth, stronger truth, than has ever yet been given to man. Much of His teaching I unhesitatingly view as, to the best of my judgment, unimprovable and unsurpassable—fitted, if obeyed, *to make earth a Paradise indeed, and man only a little lower than the angels.*”

JOHN STUART MILL.—“Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, *Christ is still left, a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers*, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. Who among *His followers was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels?* Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived—as they always professed that it was derived—

from the higher source. But about the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific reasoning when something very different was aimed at, *must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast.*"

Mr. LECKY¹ says—"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and *has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions*; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue but the highest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that *it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists.* This has indeed been the well-spring of whatever has been best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft, the persecution, and fanaticism, which have defaced the Church, it has preserved, in the character and example of its founder, *an enduring principle of regeneration.*"

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN, the well-known leader of the Brahma Somaj (a form of Deism), in a lecture on 9th April last, entitled, "India asks—Who is Christ?" near the beginning bears this eloquent testimony:—"Who

¹ *History of Morality, from Augustus to Charlemagne*, vol. ii.

rules India? What power is that that sways the destinies of India at the present moment? You are mistaken if you think that it is the ability of Lord Lytton in the Cabinet, or the military genius of Sir Frederick Haines in the field. It is not politics, it is not diplomacy, that has laid a firm hold of the Indian heart; nor is it the glittering bayonet and fiery cannon. *Christ rules India, and not the British Government. England has sent us a tremendous moral force in the life and character of that mighty Prophet to conquer and hold this vast empire. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem—India; and Christ shall have it.* If, then, India is encompassed on all sides by Christian literature, Christian civilisation, and Christian government, she must naturally endeavour to satisfy herself as to the nature of this great power in the realm which is doing such wonders in our midst. India knows not yet this power, though already so much influenced by it. She is unconsciously imbibing the spirit of this new civilisation—*succumbing to its irresistible influence.* Therefore India ought to be informed as to the real character of the source of this reforming influence—Christ. It is not the British army, I say again, that deserves honour for holding India. *If unto any army appertains the honour of holding India for England, that army is the army of Christian missionaries, headed by their invincible captain, Jesus Christ.* (Cheers.) Their devotion, their self-abnegation, their philanthropy, their love of God, their attachment and allegiance to the truth—all these have found, and will continue to find, a deep place in the gratitude of our countrymen. Therefore it is need-

less, perfectly superfluous, for me to bestow any eulogium upon such tried friends and benefactors of our country. They have brought us unto Christ. They have given us the high code of Christian ethics, and their teachings and examples have secretly influenced and won thousands of now Christian Hindoos. Let England know, that thanks to the noble band of Christ's ambassadors sent by her, she has already succeeded in planting His banners in the heart of the nation. God's blessing and India's gratitude will therefore ever belong to men such as these."¹

These passages, considering the sources whence they spontaneously came, are—what they cannot but be—fair and not overdrawn portraitures of the Man of Sorrows; who, be it remembered, was born at the very time when both Jews and Gentiles expected the Messiah, and with whose life and historical surroundings the thirteen prophecies have been proved by hostile testimony to correspond. The Jews themselves confess that no one antecedent to Him could claim the character of Messiah; and we are certain that nobody since had any pretensions to it.² And I would ask the reader to

¹ Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1879. Speech by Rev. Dr. Herdman.

² Bryant's *Authenticity of the Scriptures*. Cambridge, 1793, p. 32.

place such impartial testimony to Jesus alongside of what was predicted of the Messiah, and let him tell us what he thinks of the correspondence of the one with the other. Was this Jesus, the crucified Jew, any other than that great predicted ONE of the Old Testament, who was to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound? Who was to establish righteousness on the earth; and whose name, though He was meek and lowly, was yet to be GREAT AMONG THE GENTILES FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN EVEN TO THE GOING DOWN OF THE SAME, AND IN WHOM ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH WERE TO BE BLESSED.

CHAPTER VI.

ARGUMENT FOR SUPERNATURALISM DERIVED FROM PHYSICAL PHENOMENA.



WE have no right, as Professor Babbage says (and as is ably shewn in Professors Balfour Stewart and Tait's *Unseen Universe*), to assert that the miracles of the Bible either controverted or suspended natural laws. They may have been effected by the temporary operation of laws which are unknown to us, or by variations of the *constants* which regulate the operation of those laws with which we are familiar; and still the phenomena will remain none the less miraculous, because none the less proofs of some power unknown to us, which at a certain period, and which for that period only, called those laws into action, or caused those constants to alter. Balfour Stewart and Tait (p.

190) say, "We have now considered miracles or those apparent breaks of continuity which have been furnished by history, but our readers are already well aware that equally formidable breaks are brought before us by science. There is, to begin with, that formidable phenomenon, the production in time, of the visible universe. Secondly, there is that break, hardly less formidable, namely, the original production of life; and there is, thirdly, that break recognised by Wallace and his school of natural history, which seems to have occurred at the first production of man. . . These events (the miracles) are therefore no longer to be regarded as breaks of continuity, which we have agreed to consider impossible, but only as the results of a peculiar action of the *invisible* upon the *visible* universe." (P. 189.)

Now-a-days we worship what are called natural laws, often without any clear view of what these really are. Bishop Butler seems to have been the first who gave a correct definition of natural law. "What," he asked, "are the laws by which matter acts on matter, but certain effects which

some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general rules?"¹ Beyond this definition no philosopher can legitimately go.

Now, a molten or semi-molten mass like what our earth once was, as proved by its present spheroidal form and by geological and other observations, could not, from its high temperature, have maintained life as we know it. By what law, or as Butler would have said, "from what effects which men have frequently seen repeated," can we explain the fact that our planet is now inhabited by men and beasts, fish and fowl? Absolutely none; for abio-genesis has been entirely disproved by the experiments of Pasteur, Lister, and Tyndall. "That dead matter cannot produce a living organism is the universal experience of the most eminent physiologists. In fact, the law of bio-genesis is justly regarded by Professor Huxley and others, as the great principle underlying all the phenomena of organised existence."²

So that if life springs only from life, and never from dead inanimate matter, such as our earth

¹ Sermon xv.

² *Unseen Universe*, p. 176.

must have been when it cooled down, whence came its present inhabitants? This fact of the existence of life in our once molten world is not a whit less wonderful, or in any degree more intelligible to us on any known physical principle, than the miracles of healing one who was sick, or recalling to life one who was dead. And if it is not, then our deification of one class of laws to the exclusion of others, which, though not now in action, we know must once have been in action, is simply the erroneous result of induction from a limited number, instead of from all the phenomena which are presented to our eyes. As well might one of the Ephemera believe in the perpetual presence of sunshine, because it never had any experience of the night, which is in a few hours to wrap the earth in darkness, and put an end to its own brief existence. Or, again, when we see a "boomerang" thrown into the air, if we regard its first motion only, we shall altogether fail in detecting any trace of the working of that peculiar counteracting force which will by-and-by reverse the direction in which the projectile is moving, and compel it, after it has

completed its first flight in the air, to return again to the place from which it was thrown. In this case we see how far wrong we may go in judging from observations that are not sufficiently extended to embrace all the phenomena. What, at first sight, can appear more unlikely than that there should be a break of continuity in the movement of a body through a medium of uniform density ? yet this is proved to take place by the projectile suddenly reversing the direction of its motion, and returning to the place from which it was first violently thrown.

The apostle Peter censures this narrow and therefore unphilosophical view of natural objects, and the incautious generalisation from a too limited number of observations, when he speaks of the averment of the scoffers of the last days, —“ Since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” We find, indeed, in every science and department of life, the same fallacious tendency to draw conclusions from a too circumscribed view of nature’s works. In short, whatever is contrary to our own experience, which we have

not seen with our own eyes, we practically disbelieve, or at least doubt its having ever taken place. "We adopt," as the Bishop of Ely says, "the theory, that what we see commonly, we must see always."¹

The law of mortality, for example, which, as Gibbon happily says, is "so true in the general, and so fallacious in the particular," has been reduced to rules, and tables of the expectancy of human life are in daily use. The law, too, which regulates the intensity of storms of wind is now better understood, and will in like manner, it is hoped, be soon reduced to satisfactory rules. Yet there are elements affecting the laws of life and storms, and the amount of snow, rain, and heat, which may some day utterly upset all our calculations. So thoughtless are we, that an occurrence such as the plague of London in 1666 has passed completely out of our minds, and we begin to doubt whether the whole story be not a fable, or at most, but a gross exaggeration of the truth. And so of the great storm of November 1703. But why may not the plague

¹ *Aids to Faith*, p. 305.

and the cholera recur, and make far greater excursions from the boundary line which usually divides life from death? or why may not a tempest occur with a far steeper barometric gradient than that of 1703, or a flood of altogether unprecedented volume? What widespread death and havoc would ensue if the invisible power which holds these forces in check, and as to which science tells us absolutely nothing, should cease to curb the rein which holds them in restraint! Yet these subordinate forces, which periodically interfere with the usual working of the laws regulating the death-rate, and the intensity of storms, and other atmospheric phenomena, may, for aught we know, be in some respects similar to those by which miracles were effected in the time of Christ. The only difference may be, that while the first are always in action, and only periodically excursive, the others are not always, but only occasionally, brought into activity. We see, every day of our lives, that natural laws can be made subservient by man to his wishes, and so worked by him as to produce an endless succes-

sion of beneficial results. Even by means of the simplest mechanical arrangements we can accumulate the energy of small powers, so as to produce all their effects simultaneously. We are also continually converting potential into actual energy, for producing the kind of powers that are required for different departments of the industrial arts ; while chemistry and magnetism are made useful by us in innumerable appliances for the good of mankind. May the Deity not be expected to wield His laws so as to achieve much greater results than His creatures, who owe to Him all the powers with which they are endowed ?

We cannot better wind up these remarks on the physical argument than by giving the following striking passage :—

“The great scientific principle,” say the authors of the *Unseen Universe*, “which we have made use of has been the law of continuity. This simply means that the whole universe is of a piece ; that it is something which an intelligent being is capable of understanding—not completely, nor all at

once, but better and better the more he studies it. . . If, then, we regard the universe from this point of view, we are led to a scientific conception of it which is, we have seen, strikingly analogous to that system with which we are presented in the Christian religion ; for not only are the *nebulous beginning* and the *fiery termination* of the present visible universe indicated in the Christian records, but a constitution and power are assigned to the unseen universe strikingly analogous to those at which we have arrived by a legitimate scientific process. Our readers are now in a position to perceive the result of questioning science in this manner, and of abandoning ourselves without mistrust or hesitation to the guidance of legitimate principles. It is, that science so developed, instead of appearing antagonistic to the claims of Christianity, is in reality its most efficient supporter ; and the burden of showing how the early Christians got hold of a constitution of the unseen universe similar to that which science proclaims, is transferred to the shoulders of the opponents of Christianity."

And now, in conclusion, we shall in a few words recapitulate the results at which we have arrived. Without any help from the New Testament, except when quoted merely to show that its authors—whether truly or falsely is nothing to the present purpose—asserted that Christ claimed to be the Messiah, we have, it is hoped, clearly shown that, granting Hume's argument against miracles to the fullest extent, his reasoning cannot apply to the clearly fulfilled prophecies which were uttered long before the time of Christ, and all of which were *declared to be Messianic by the early Jewish commentators*. It has been further shown that the origin of life in our once molten world can only be explained by miraculous agency, or at least by an agency which is wholly unknown to us, and which transcends the ordinary operation of all known natural laws.

But if the existence of an unseen supernatural power has been proved, even in a single case, there is no reason to object, nor is any end gained to sceptics by the objection, that it may not have been exerted in producing

the New Testament miracles. Moreover, however specious Hume's argument may be, as urged against the probability of Christ's miracles *taken by themselves*, it is altogether inconclusive, or rather wholly inapplicable, to the case of prophecies which were uttered long before their fulfilment; or to the production of physical phenomena, in explanation of which all science is dumb, and which cannot therefore be referred to other than an unseen supernatural agency, or at least to an agency of which we now know nothing whatever.

I feel bound, however, to admit that the best practical proof of the truth of Christianity is to be found not in such arguments as we have been considering in the foregoing chapters, but in another and very different direction. What most effectively convinces persons of a normal physical and moral type, is the actual constraint for good which has been produced on men's lives, however imperfect these may have been and still are. Most persons know well that they would have lived very different lives in the world but for the

claims of the Divine revelation, even though these have been but poorly appreciated by them. Instead of doing constant—though often unsuccessful—battle against their inclinations, they would have felt that constraint to be uncalled for, because of unproved authority, and would have at once yielded to those propensities which they thought were the workings of nature within them. But amidst all the perplexities and difficulties which they may have found in the Scriptures, they are forced to admit that the truth which touches them most effectively is really there and nowhere else. There is, in fact, no getting over this practical personal question—Should I have been a better or as good a man had I wholly rejected Christianity, or should I now prefer for my children a Christian or an Atheistic education? Theorisings are worthless about what is quietly and very conveniently assumed as *our duty to humanity*; for that dogma wants authority, which, in such a matter as this, is the one thing needful. The morality, such as it is, of heathen or pagan nations, is not due to humanitarian motives, but

to the belief that it is enjoined by their unseen gods. Though it is doubtless true that appeals, based on the claims of humanity, may be thought sufficient by some persons of exceptional temperament, they are of no avail whatever with the ordinary class of men in enabling them to wrestle daily with temptations to evil. Thousands have testified that the claims of Christ's teaching and atonement were alone sufficient to sustain them in this weary warfare, and their testimony ought not to be ignored.

Yet, though all this be true, we should not under-estimate, on the other hand, the importance of strengthening the foundations of our faith in the Scriptures; for our reason must be satisfied, as well as our affections engaged. Hence, I believe, it will not be disputed that attempts, such as the foregoing, to strengthen by outside historical evidence, our convictions of the divine origin of the Bible, are no unnecessary work in the present day, when Atheism and other less pronounced forms of infidelity are so widely spread and so openly promulgated.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MESSIANIC ATONEMENT.



So a fitting, if not a necessary, conclusion to the arguments for the historic fulfilment of the predictions regarding Christ contained in the earlier chapters, I have thought it right to say a few words about the doctrine of the Atonement, because the carrying out of that was the great end for which the Messiah came into the world. It is just possible that there may be some persons who, though satisfied as to the pre-Christian prophecies of the advent, may be nevertheless unprepared to accept the truth of the Atonement itself. It is specially for such readers that this chapter has been written, and not for those to whom the preceding arguments have proved either unacceptable or insufficient.

I have endeavoured in what follows to pre-

sent the subject in a certain aspect, which appears to me calculated to reduce, if not to remove, some of the difficulties that unquestionably attend this most mysterious, but nevertheless central, truth of holy writ.

There is a small but apparently an increasing number of persons who, though as Deists they renounce all faith in a written revelation, yet profess to find what they call religion in trees and mountains, in skies and seas. Such men have, I suppose, far more of the *πρὸς τὸν Θεόν* about them than falls to the lot of most people, though doubtless all admire, as well as they, the proofs of omniscience and omnipotence which are everywhere visible in the world. But there are not very many who find in nature itself anything which they can adore, much less love, while they live in such a Juggernaut world as this, in which all are doomed to a tragic end. For what is a tragedy but a life of ups and downs which ends sadly? And this is the fate of every son of Adam. We eat, we drink, we talk and laugh; but the end is no laughing matter. It

is nothing more than mere empty *brag* for any man, but especially for a Sceptic or an Atheist, to affect to speak lightly of the close of his life. For such a man will not affirm that it is said of those of his way of thinking, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." It is indeed a truly serious matter for such persons to find the earthly tabernacle crumbling to its ruin, and in the solitude of the night watches, or even in the full suntide of the day, to bid good-bye for eternity to those they have known so long and loved so well, and then to take what Hobbes of Malmesbury called the great leap in the dark. An Eastern despot condemns to death his prisoners of war, and confines them in a garden, rich, it may be, in all kinds of flowers, of shrubs, and fruit trees. Each prisoner knows that one day he is to be brought out to suffer death, but he may be years waiting his doom ; for but one is taken at a time, and nobody knows whose turn is to come next ; yet all may amuse themselves in the garden as best they can, till their day of doom comes round. Such, too, is our lot here

below. The earth is our fair and well-stocked garden, from which one is taken and another left ; but all must go at last.

When we look around us at the terrible possibilities of this life, at the widespread catastrophes, the heavy sorrows, and the dismal deathbeds that are always to be found somewhere in the world, we are often solemnised ; and all the more when we think of the ardent affections of a mother and a father to their child, of the love of husband and wife, of brother and sister, of friend to friend. Contrast all this with the harsh decrees of Nature, which suddenly break up every one of these happy relations ; and in absence of a divine revelation we cannot but exclaim, " O God, how sublimely indifferent Thou art to the affections which Thou hast put into the hearts of these Thy creatures !" All suffering humanity, as with one voice, has asked and still asks for sympathy and help from Him who placed them in this world. And have we not *a right* to expect sympathy from Him who placed us here ? for we have had no say in the matter of our

own creation. As we are told in the 100th Psalm, and all Deists believe it, "Know ye that the Lord he is God : it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves ;" or as Isaiah says, "God Himself formed the earth, and made it : He hath established it : He created it not in vain, and hath formed it to be inhabited." How, then, can we love or adore this God who is our Maker, if He refuses to have anything to do with us after having brought us into this world of sickness and woe ? But is it so that He takes no interest in the sheep of His pasture ? Must the forlorn widow still mourn, the helpless child still cry, the fallen be ever trodden down by an unfeeling world, and each one be left at last to wrestle all alone, as best he can, with the overmastering angel of death, without getting so much as one word of consolation from the God who has brought him into such deep, swelling waters ? Has He placed conscience within us only to mock us, and sting us like an adder ? and has He implanted in us such warm, such noble, such generous affections, merely that they

may be extinguished for ever by a cold or a fever?

Even if no perfect remedy were possible for this sad state of matters, we might at least expect some kind word of sympathy from the Deity to His suffering children. But alas! no message has ever come to us from those skies or those seas, those hills or those mountains. All nature is silent as death regarding this craving of our souls, though it has ever been prodigal enough in supplying our merely animal wants. "The bare deistic idea," says Mr. Morley (who takes the atheistic view), "of a being endowed at once with sovereign power and sovereign clemency, with might that cannot be resisted, and justice that cannot be impugned, who loves man with infinite tenderness, yet sends him no word of comfort, and gives him no way of deliverance, is too hard a thing for those who have to endure the hardship of the brutes, but yet preserve the intelligence of men." "Will you sweeten the lives of suffering men, and take its heaviness from that droning, piteous chronicle of wrong

and cruelty and despair, which everlastingly saddens the compassionating ear like moanings of a midnight sea? Will you animate the stout of heart with new fire, and the firm of hand with fresh joy of battle, by the thought of a being without intelligible attributes—a mere abstract creation of metaphysics, whose mercy is not as our mercy, his justice as our justice, nor his fatherhood as the fatherhood of men?”

Such views as these are the natural, and indeed inevitable, deductions from a belief in the omnipotence of God viewed *per se*, and it is quite true that this is one of God's attributes which is clearly enough laid down in Scripture. But we must be careful not to accept this truth as if there were no other. I am satisfied from conversing with those who do not believe the Atonement that their difficulties have arisen from fixing their thoughts mainly on this one divine attribute to the practical exclusion of all other Scriptural teaching. Scepticism very often springs from narrow views or imperfect knowledge of the facts of

the case. And so here men assume that if it be true, as Scripture alleges, that God said at the creation, "Let there be light, and there was light," He might as easily have said, "Let there be universal righteousness and happiness," and righteousness and happiness would everywhere have prevailed. But Scripture, while asserting the truth of the one fact, does not lend its authority to the other assertion. Neither does it assign any reason why no irresistible *Fiat*, dispelling spiritual darkness as contrary to His will, has ever been pronounced. But, on the other hand, it teaches us most plainly that although sin and its consequences are utterly hateful to God, they still continue in the world, and all human experience confirms the truth of the statement.

Now no one can tell why this spiritual darkness should not have been long ago dispelled by God, as was the physical darkness at the creation. But the fact remains that after the Fall it was not so, nor is it so now; and this ought to teach us, if it is intended to teach us anything, that there must have existed,

and that there still exists, some unknown but sufficient cause for His will not being carried out in this respect ; and that this difficulty (if such a word may be used for want of a better) must have been greater than that of dispelling physical darkness or of making suns and planets. Had there not been some such impediment, why should God's declared will not have been implemented, and universal righteousness re-established ?

Here, however, we dare not speak but with the utmost caution and humility. Ignorant and fallible men, as all are, may well tremble on approaching even the threshold of such subjects as the origin and the continuance of evil taken in connection with the omnipotence of God. Yet we cannot shut our eyes to what is everywhere visible. Facts must never be ignored in any inquiry. Moreover, are we not warranted in looking at what Scripture itself tells us on this subject. And surely nothing can indicate more strongly the inspiration of that revelation than its fearless teaching of the doctrine of predestination and God's omni-

potence and holiness, stated alongside of the equally plain statement of man's free will and sinfulness, and the devil's rebellion against the Almighty. Both the Old Testament and the New fully warrant us in saying, though it must be with all reverence, that even God is in a certain degree conditioned by His own moral attributes, and that, doubtless for the wisest reason, though utterly inconceivable by us, He has to some further extent temporarily conditioned Himself by a certain state of matters in His universe. For example, as regards His attributes, He cannot commit sin, nor yet can He look upon it in any other way than with abhorrence. To do otherwise would be to violate His own holiness. Then, as a matter of experience as well as of revelation, we know that sin, though entirely opposed to His will, continues to exist; and Satan, though an enemy to God, exists also, and has great power in the world; while even man, weak and frail though he be, appears often as a daring opposer of His Maker. It is no doubt because we are intellectually incapable of comprehending



such high mysteries that nowhere in Scripture is any explanation given of His reasons for thus temporarily withholding His power.

Many quotations might be given from the Scriptures as to the existence and the temporary power given to Satan, but it will be sufficient to give the following quotation from Dr. Keith on that subject :—" In Scripture the great deceiver is called the prince of this world, the god of this age, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, the wicked one under whom the whole world lieth, the adversary, and the accuser of the brethren, the great dragon called the devil and Satan (his common Scripture appellations), who deceiveth the whole world,"¹ etc. He shall "deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season."

It is surely impossible, with these quotations before us, to deny that the Deity has, for some inscrutable reason, placed himself in such a

¹ Keith's *History and Destiny of the World and of the Church*, p. 3. London : Longmans.

relation to Satan, to sin, and to man, as to allow His will to be temporarily thwarted. And these truths, however inexplicable they may be to us, are truths notwithstanding; and more than that, they are Bible truths, and quite as puzzling as anything that relates to the mysterious doctrine of the Atonement.

Now we have here, of all the contradictions of the world of our experience, undoubtedly the most flagrant. The thing which God assuredly most hates continues to exist—an incredible difficulty—a problem so hard as to be utterly incapable of solution. If, then, God is to help us at all, should we be astonished if the remedy seem also incredible? The scheme of the Atonement is not perhaps after our mind; but IS IT ANY LESS SO THAN THE DIFFICULTY WHICH IT PURPOSES TO MEET? Both are incomprehensible and paradoxical. Each revolts against something which we should like to believe; and it is impossible to state either, plausibly, in the tongue of human logic. Yet the one is patent in the facts of life, and the other, being the cure for that, may well be

expected equally to transcend our comprehension. In a matter so dark, so tragic, let us not forget the stern facts of our own experience, nor yet confound ourselves with any delusive reasonings about God's omnipotence, or go about to abuse human language in the discussion of divine matters which clearly far surpass our limited understanding. Here is something that looks like God's defeat—incredible, yet unquestionably true; and here something else, equally incredible and equally pitiful, which yet turns the victory on God's side, and on the side of righteousness and of man's eternal welfare. Were the world of our experience uniformly clear and plain, and all of one tissue, we might perhaps afford to halt and attempt to discuss these difficulties. As it is, where all is so dark and incomprehensible, must we not bow the head, and gratefully receive a tragic and mysterious cure for an evil equally tragic, equally mysterious, and yet, as proved by our own daily experience, most certainly true.

But let us look for a moment at the Atonement itself as the only solvent which has been

given to us of all our manifold difficulties concerning the evils by which we are surrounded—the most superabundantly ample and astounding answer to that one persistent cry for divine sympathy that has ascended to heaven in all ages and from all nations of the earth. Now, I will venture boldly to challenge the whole world to suggest any way by which the Deity *could* have given as full an assurance and as great a proof of sympathy, friendship, and loving-kindness to the human race as by *taking on HIMSELF the atoning punishment of men's sins*. The matter is thus represented to us in Scripture: The Father, whose scriptural name is Love, accepts the voluntary sacrifice of His own Son, who, appearing in human form, dies willingly upon the cross, declaring that no man takes away His life, but that He lays it down of Himself. Surely if any less costly sacrifice *COULD* have answered the purpose, or have met the difficulties of the case, or have satisfied the claims of divine justice, the “Lord of Glory” would never have shed His precious blood, the Just would never have died for the unjust.

And so, because the decree, based on God's eternal justice had gone forth, that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins, He Himself "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." The charge of injustice, which is so often brought against the Father for accepting the sacrifice of the Son (voluntary though that sacrifice was) surely disappears if we keep in mind the unity of the Godhead.

The compassionate Son of God, bearing what is to us the most encouraging title, "*the friend of publicans and sinners*," has silenced all our complaints and repinings about our own lot, hard though that lot be, because He has shown us that all along He did really care for us, for He is called "the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world;" that He came down among us not only to make common cause with us against our great enemy, who is called "the accuser of the brethren," but to identify His own self with our lot, and to die for us on the cross. Truly Thou hadst a good right to ask, in the unanswerable language of the prophet Isaiah, "*What COULD*

have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

No wonder indeed that Christ should occupy the central place and be the all-in-all engrossing theme of the Bible, "the sum and quintessence of the gospel, the wonder of angels, the joy and triumph of saints."¹ If you take *Him* out of that book, or if you regard Him as merely a teacher of ethics, the whole fabric tumbles to the ground as an unmeaning—yea, a dumb insulting revelation, which tells us to do certain things which it says are right, without investing us with the needful power, or giving us any satisfactory reason for their being commanded, or holding out any sufficient inducement to us to obey them—containing no glad tidings of great joy, and being therefore no longer a gospel of peace, or any gospel at all.

It ceases *then* to have any attractions for the weary and the heavy laden children of men, who are chafing under the bitter yoke of the devil and his angels. It gives no proof of

¹ Watson's *Divinity*.

God's sympathy with us in our tragic fate ; it ceases to respond to the great, all-prevailing cry of humanity. It leaves us where it found us, miserable yet rational outcasts, to whom no words of comfort are addressed ; but instead of these words of comfort it presents us with a code of uncompromising, dry morals, each of which opposes our instincts and our natural proclivities. A revelation such as that would want *the one thing needful* ; it would be but a mocking revelation, which was wholly inadequate to meet the wants of the despairing sinner, or to minister consolation to the dying soul, or to yield comfort to the mourners as they stand around the sepulchre that has been opened to receive their beloved dead. There would then truly be no balm in Gilead and no physician there.

But instead of that, it will not be disputed that we find an absolute assurance that God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, will abundantly pardon the penitent, and will, as in the parable of the Prodigal Son, run to meet him while he is yet a great

way off, and will fall on his neck and kiss him. Whosoever he be that cometh will in no case be cast out, or told to seek His face in vain. "There is joy among the angels in heaven over even one sinner that repenteth." "The bruised reed He will not break, the smoking flax He will not quench," neither will He despise the "day of small things." "As far as the east is distant from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He remembers that we are dust." "Come then, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee." "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee."

“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed from thee.” “O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours.” “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?” “Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.” “Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted.” “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And *whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely.” “What *could* have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?”

These are some of the many words of entreaty addressed to us in Scripture. And, as an appropriate sequel to these appeals, let it ever be remembered that *during all the life of the Man of Sorrows* we nowhere read

even of a single case in which He sent any one empty away, but in every instance, without a single exception, the prayer of faith was answered, whether it was a petition for the cure of spiritual or physical evils. His language was ever the same : " Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." " Be of good cheer, thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." " Neither do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more." " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem (and this was said with tears), how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Once more (and this was said when on the cross), " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Few persons, I should think, will complain that these appeals are not sufficiently earnest or encouraging. Can we really expect the Deity to stoop lower, or to carry entreaty further ? What more could have been said to us ? What more could have been done for us ? The whole may be summed up in the eloquent words of St. Paul—

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.





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